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FINAL REPORT

of the

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGION COMMUNITY IMPACT STUDY — 1980

prepared for

The Grande Prairie and District United Way

and

The Government of Alberta
represented by

The Minister of Tourism and Small Business
The Minister of the Environment, and
The Northern Alberta Development Council

[Cost shared by local agencies, the]
[Northern Development Branch of]
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[Federal Department of]
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[The Canada/Alberta Subsidiary Agreement]
[on Alberta North 1977/82.]

prepared by

Carcajou Research Limited
Edmonton, Alberta

November 1980

IMPORTANT NOTE

The conclusions and recommendations of this Report are the responsibility of Carcajou Research Limited, and although developed in consultation with the Steering Committee and other local people, do not necessarily conform to the views of The Grande Prairie and District United Way, The Government of Alberta, the municipalities in the Study area, or any other participant in the Study.

A NOTE ON THE PURPOSE AND STYLE OF THIS REPORT

The reporting of results from this study has not taken a conventional form. Reporting and discussion of results began informally in mid-September 1980, and continued both formally and informally until mid-November. The first formal step was taken at the end of September, with submission of the evaluation report on Preventive Social Services to the P.S.S. Board. That report was reviewed with the Board on October 7.

The second, and very important step was the Workshop on October 8 and 9, when about 50 people from agencies and the general public heard a summary of research findings, and had the opportunity to discuss recommendations in small-group and plenary sessions.

The third step was a meeting with the Steering Committee on October 29, to review and discuss the recommendations that came out of the Study, including those proposed at the Workshop.

This report is the fourth step, and is intended to draw together all the results of the previous steps, and to form a permanent record of the Study. It is not a conventional research report, for two reasons. First, it is written for broad distribution and use by people in the communities of the region, and therefore could be of only moderate length. A large amount of information was collected during this Study. To report in full detail would require a document so large that it would seldom, if ever, be read. Second, there was no time to prepare such a report, even had it been desirable. The research plan called for about 25% of time and budget to be spent in analysis and reporting. Most of that was used in the various parts of the community participation process, and especially in preparations for the Workshop and for the discussion of recommendations with the Steering Committee.

This report, therefore, is not both the beginning and the end of the reporting process, but only the end. It is a summary of what we have learned, and of the deliberations that have taken place so far. It is not a polished research report in the academic style, but is intended to be, as the whole Study was intended to be, a contribution to a locally-based process, leading to greater understanding of the social characteristics of the region, and better services to people.

Techniques for collecting and analyzing information in community studies are much more highly developed than are techniques for presenting it. By broadening and diversifying the methods of reporting, we have tried to avoid the major short-coming of conventional research reports, namely, that they are useful only to other researchers and people of similar cast of mind.

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CHAPTER I

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RESEARCH METHOD

1. Study Objectives

- (1) To review recent economic activity in the Grande Prairie region and to project population numbers and characteristics for the next five years.
- (2) To review various "social services" in the communities and discuss their relationship to community well-being.
- (3) To assess the effect of population growth on these services and identify possible problems.
- (4) To collect residents' perceptions on the social and service needs of the community and the effects of population growth.
- (5) To recommend improvements to services and methods of minimizing the adverse effects of rapid growth.
- (6) To evaluate the Preventive Social Services Program and to report separately to the P.S.S. Board.

2. Study Area

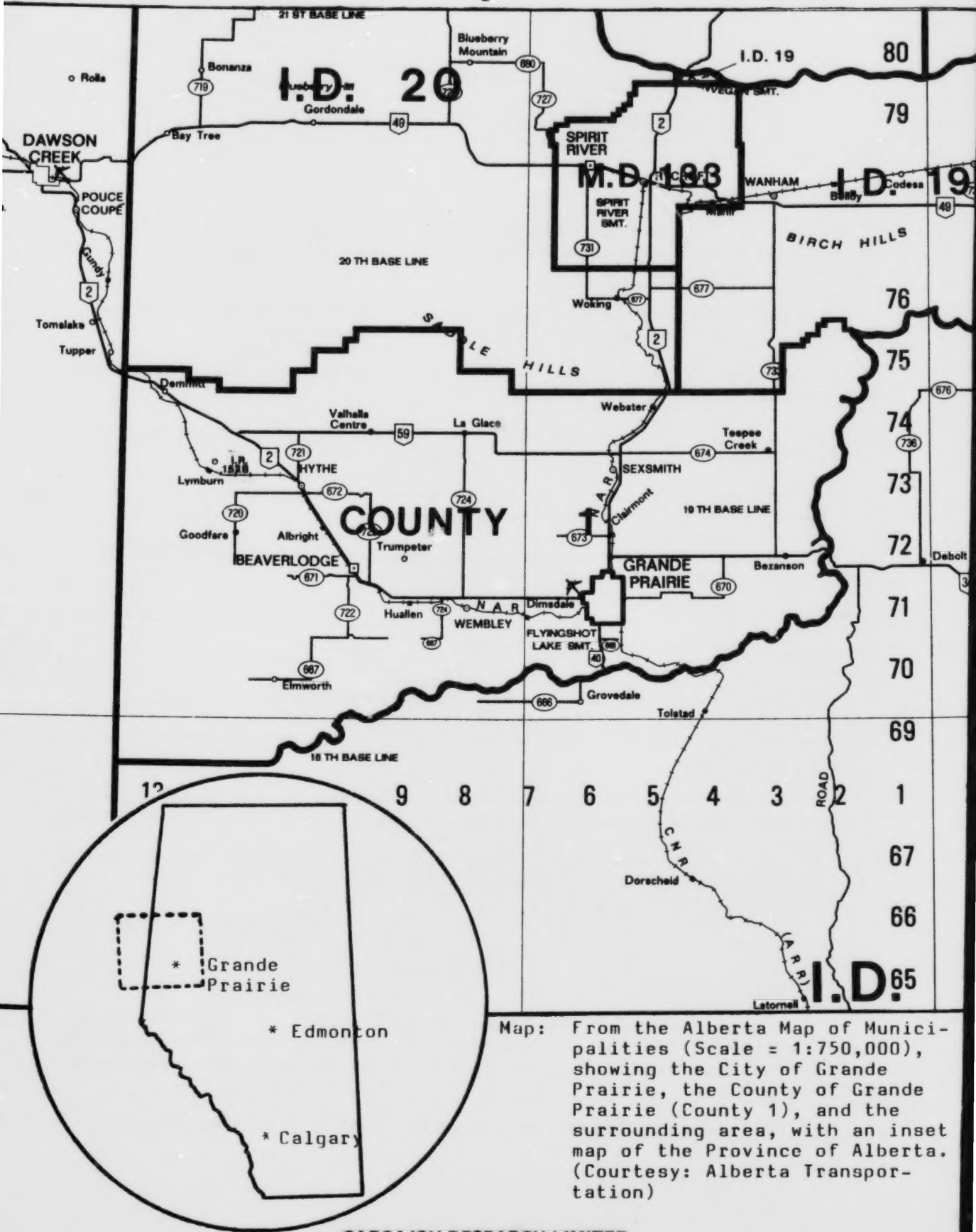
The Study area was the Grande Prairie Region, including the City of Grande Prairie, the County of Grande Prairie, the Towns of Beaverlodge, Sexsmith and Wembley, and the Village of Hythe. Page 2 contains a map.

All these municipalities were contacted by the Steering Committee during the formative stages of the Study. The City supported the idea of the Study; the mayor became a member of the Steering Committee. The other centres were less enthusiastic. Nevertheless, the Steering Committee retained them in the Study area, in order to preserve all the benefits of a regional study.

3. Organization of the Study

A description of the background to the Study, and the steps taken by the United Way and other members of the Steering Committee before research began is given in the Terms of Reference, Appendix A.

The Steering Committee was made up of a Chairman from the



Map: From the Alberta Map of Municipalities (Scale = 1:750,000), showing the City of Grande Prairie, the County of Grande Prairie (County 1), and the surrounding area, with an inset map of the Province of Alberta. (Courtesy: Alberta Transportation)

United Way Board of Directors; two other representatives from that Board; one representative from the Grande Prairie Chamber of Commerce; one from the Grande Prairie Health Unit; one from Preventive Social Services; one from the City of Grande Prairie; one from Alberta Mental Health Services; one from the Northern Alberta Development Council, and two from Alberta Environment.

The Steering Committee itself displayed one of the important characteristics of the region during the Study: that is, turnover. Between the beginning and the end of research (5 months) three members left the area altogether, and one resigned because of business pressure.

The Community Resource Group developed in two stages. It began from a list prepared by the United Way of about 50 agencies who were contacted for expressions of interest in the Study. From that response came the Steering Committee. Then, during the Study, other agencies and individuals were identified who were interested in participating in research, or who were thought to have some particularly valuable contribution to make. The total group of over 100 people received invitations to attend the Study Workshop, described in Section 5 below.

Funding for the Study came from several sources. Most was contributed by two departments of the Alberta Government: Alberta Tourism and Small Business, and Alberta Environment, and was obtained through the efforts of the Northern Alberta Development Council. The rest came from the City of Grande Prairie (to pay for printing of the final report), two oil companies (Dome Petroleum and Union Oil), and various local agencies who contributed goods and services in kind. No funds for this Study came from donations made to the United Way during its regular annual campaign.

The consultants were Carcajou Research Limited of Edmonton, who were selected from among four contenders after submission of research proposals and interviews with the Steering Committee. Carcajou employed two research principals and one local research assistant for the Study.

4. Features of the Study Design

(1) Detailed Description

The Study was to describe the "social services system", by which was meant the whole system of services to people delivered by public agencies, including the agencies of various levels of government, agencies funded by them, agencies raising money through public subscription, and other public, non-profit agencies. Excluded

were commercial businesses and private, non-profit agencies such as private clubs.

The Study was also to describe the social characteristics of the region and the effects of rapid population growth on people and on the services and operations of agencies.

(2) Prediction

An important purpose of the Study was to predict future population growth and characteristics, and translate those predictions into demands for various services.

As research unfolded, prediction became less important. First, we discovered a back-log of service needs and organizational problems, resulting from the rapid growth of the past two years. The job of clearing that back-log and refining the organization of the system should be undertaken regardless of how the future unfolds, even if it were to contain no growth at all. The fact that continued growth is expected gives the job considerable urgency.

Second, the future hinges heavily on developments in the oil and gas industry, and the situation there is in a peculiar state of uncertainty, for the time being. Any prediction therefore will be highly questionable, and it is better to plan on the basis of a completely unpredictable future. That way, the system will be ready for anything.

Predictions will be made in Chapter II, and the implications of inherent unpredictability will be discussed in Chapter VI, once all recommendations have been laid out.

(3) Evaluation

The first level of evaluation required by the Terms of Reference was specific: the Preventive Social Services Program was to be evaluated, and a separate report prepared for the P.S.S. Board.

The second level of evaluation involved the other agencies and programs in the system. We were not required to evaluate each one of these, but to gather together whatever evaluative information was presented to us during the Study, and to report on it.

The third level of evaluation concerned the entire system of social services, to evaluate the system as a whole, the structure of its various components, their linkages and methods of coordination and cooperation, and the ability of the system to respond to the future needs of the population.

(4) Community Involvement

The Terms of Reference required a large amount of community involvement in the Study, to be achieved in three ways: first, by the operations of the Steering Committee; second, by individual and collective consultation with members of the Community Resource Group; and third, through a program of household interviewing.

(5) The Pressure of Time

Time pressure was a constant factor in this Study. Research began on the 16th of June, 1980. The report to the Preventive Social Services Board was due by the end of September, and the preliminary report on the entire Study was to be presented to a workshop for the Community Resource Group by the end of September or early October (it was held on October 8 and 9). The final report was due by November 7th, as soon as possible after municipal elections.

5. Sources of Information

(1) Formal Interviews

The most important source of information was interviews, which were of three kinds. First, in both the City and the County, a sampling procedure was used to select households. In the City, a list of 380 households (approximately 5%) was selected randomly from maps of residential lots and from a direct inventory of apartments. In the County, one section from every township was selected randomly, with the object of interviewing every household residing on that section. In travelling around the County for interviews, every opportunity was seized to talk with any other people who were available, resulting in a number of interesting roadside conversations.

The yield of interviews from this process was not as good as anticipated. All sample addresses were visited at least once (twice or three times in the City; call-backs were always made at a different time from the original call, and interviews were conducted in the evenings). In the end, we obtained 196 interviews at households in the City (51.6% response) and 45 in the County. Observations suggest that the low rate of response was due mainly to summer holidays, but absences for shopping, work and recreation were also important.

Second, in Sexsmith, Wembley, Hythe and Beaverlodge, interviews were obtained by chance. We spent two or three days in each community, and obtained as many interviews as possible in that time. This strategy resulted in 18 interviews from Sexsmith, 16 from Wembley, 9 in Beaverlodge and 5 in Hythe.

Third, we carried out a systematic program of interviews with representatives of social service agencies and organizations, by which 90 agencies were contacted at least once, and some several times. These interviews covered all the major components of the social services system.

The following table summarizes the number of interviews obtained in each place, and the response per 100 households.

	<u>Number of Interviews</u>	<u>Interviews per 100 Households</u>
City of Grande Prairie:		
Households	196	2.6
Agencies	90	--
County of Grande Prairie	45	1.2
Beaverlodge	9	1.5
Sexsmith	18	4.7
Wembley	16	4.3
Hythe	5	2.2
Total	379	2.9

Since many of these interviews were with two or more people, the number of contacts through formal interviews was well over 500 people.

The low rate of response in the County and in Beaverlodge is disappointing. In the County, it came about because we had difficulty finding people at home, and were not able to make call-backs. In Beaverlodge we were the victims of circumstances; we scheduled our interviews there, by accident, during preparations for Home-Coming, and many of the people we wanted to talk with were not available. We had intended to return, but time ran out.

(2) Non-Formal Contacts with People

During field work a large number of non-formal contacts took place, many of which yielded nothing of value to research. Some contributed small bits of information that could be fitted into the whole, or that helped to decode the mass of other data. These occurred in many places—in restaurants, motels and stores; in neighbourhoods where we stayed or paid social calls; on the streets, highways and back roads; at meetings and community events; and so on. Notes were not kept of these contacts unless something significant came out of them, and no estimate of numbers can be made.

(3) Formal Meetings

On some occasions we were able to attend meetings discussing matters of importance to the Study. Six of these were part of the P.S.S. Internal Evaluation; one was the public hearing of the Energy Resources Conservation Board in Beaverlodge; one was a meeting

of the Anglican congregation in Grande Prairie to decide on a new location for the church; others were of lesser importance.

(4) Study Meetings and Workshops

During the Study the Steering Committee met 12 times to discuss progress and results, a process that yielded many valuable insights and provided an opportunity for the researchers to present ideas.

The Study also sponsored two wider events — a social evening on September 17, 1980, to bring members of the Community Resource Group together and to prepare them for the up-coming Workshop, and the Workshop itself held on October 8 and 9. The agenda for the Workshop was:

October 8, Evening - presentation of preliminary research results by representatives of Carcajou.

October 9, Morning - small group discussions on:

- child development and youth services;
- services in support of family, neighbourhood and community life;
- services to special groups, i.e., elderly people, handicapped people, single parents;
- "Boomtown" problems and services.

October 9, Afternoon- full-group review of small-group discussions; review of preliminary research results; formulation of procedures for follow-up to the Study and implementation of recommendations.

On the whole, we judge that the Workshop was reasonably successful. The small group sessions particularly yielded a number of useful comments and ideas that have been incorporated in the Study. But in retrospect it is clear that the Workshop was too rushed, and would have been even more valuable if we had allowed time between the initial presentation of results and the beginning of discussion, so that people could think about the research material before being asked to comment, and if more time had been scheduled for discussion. Considering the size of the region, the scope of the Study, and the complexity of results, 10 hours of discussion could only scratch the surface.

One objective of the Workshop was to replace the conventional draft report with a verbal and immediate discussion; to expose a representative group of suppliers and users of service to our research results, and to obtain ideas on recommendations that might be appropriate. Certainly we obtained much better feedback than we usually get from draft reports.

(5) Participant Observations

The 4½ months that the three researchers lived and worked in the community offered many opportunities for direct observation of conditions, and for developing some of the perspectives of residents. The two principal researchers spent a combined total of 84 days in residence, living at various times in motels, in a private home on the south side of the City, and on a farm near Valhalla Centre. The local research assistant, who has lived in Grande Prairie for 4 years, was of course a permanent resident all during the Study.

(6) Literature

Two types of literature were used. First, some reports on local conditions and the activities of service agencies were used as sources of data and recommendations. These are listed in the bibliography, Appendix B. Second, we surveyed some of the "boomtown" research literature. Little of it was of specific value, however. The classic "boomtown" situation features communities much smaller than Grande Prairie, and much less well provided with services. Although we found some similarities between Grande Prairie's experiences and those described in the literature, Grande Prairie has enough unique features to make the literature a questionable source of insights.

6. Summary: the Quality of Information in the Study

A sad reality for conscientious contract researchers, among whom we number ourselves, is that the information is never as good as we think it should be, or as we hoped it would be at the outset of a study. This Study is no exception, although it does have some strong features.

First, it is based on a large amount of field research time, and a large number of contacts with people. We had hoped to reach a minimum of 300 households, but fell short by 11. We had hoped for better response in the County and in Beaverlodge. But these deficiencies are to some extent made up by the large number of less formal contacts, including meetings, and by the opportunities for participant observations. We think that we have come to know the area about as well as can be done in less than five months.

Second, we received excellent responses from the people that we interviewed. We did not use formal questionnaires, but adopted a "conversational" style of interview, in which we put forward an introductory question concerning people's reactions to recent events, and followed up their responses until we felt we had a solid, detailed reaction from them to the phenomenon of rapid growth, and until we knew what services they were using, and wanted to have.

Third, we think this Study has an unusually strong element

of community participation, through the Steering Committee and the Community Resource Group. Keeping people involved was hampered to some extent by summer holidays, and by turnover, but on the whole, we believe that people have had ample opportunity to react to the study results as they unfolded, and to be part of the process of analysis.

The attachment of the P.S.S. Evaluation to this Study both strengthened the results, and created some problems. On the one hand, it gave us the opportunity to understand very well the way P.S.S. operates in Grande Prairie, and to see clearly both its strengths and its limitations. We believe that P.S.S. should have a very important position in the system of social services, and that the role we have outlined for P.S.S. is realistic both in terms of what the agency ought to be doing, and what it can do. We are confident of that, because we have come to know the agency so well.

On the other hand, the evolution of the whole Study was bedevilled by the fact that the deadline for submission of the P.S.S. report did not match the deadlines for the total Study. A study should unfold more or less linearly: information is collected, then analyzed; recommendations are formulated; feedback is obtained; a report is written. In this case, analysis had to be done, and recommendations for P.S.S. formulated, before all the data from the complete Study had been collected, before the Workshop took place, and before the general recommendations of the Study were prepared. The deadline for the P.S.S. report was set for good reasons, because of the timing of municipal elections. We simply had to accept the risk that the P.S.S. recommendations might not be compatible with the conclusions and recommendations of the entire Study. Luckily, everything came together properly at the end, and the problem of timing turned out not to have serious consequences.

7. Analysis and Use of the Information

In Section 5 of this Chapter we described the six sources of our information. In the chapters that follow we will describe the conclusions we have drawn and our recommendations. We should perhaps say something about the process that led from the data to the conclusions and recommendations.

One of the six sources completely dominates this study, and that of course is the formal interviews. No conclusion has been drawn that did not have its roots explicitly or implicitly in a significant number of formal interviews, of one kind or another. We will return below to the definition of "a significant number".

Of course, not everybody in the interviews said the same thing; in fact, we heard a wide divergence of views on most of the important issues that were raised, with a few exceptions. In some

cases we have simply reported that a divergence of views exists, and have developed whatever recommendations seemed appropriate under the circumstances. In others it was necessary to resolve the difference, and to end up on one side or the other. To do that, we employed a complex system of cross-checks.

We looked first of all at the sources of the different views, and checked them for reliability, for self-interestedness, and for political bias. We were not always able to see the facts that people were using to develop their views, but we always checked to see whether they did have facts to support their view, or, if that kind of confirmation could not be made, to see whether it was plausible that they had facts. Where people from agencies were taking a particular point of view, we tried to see if the same or compatible views were coming from the households, and vice versa. We cross-checked the views of agencies with other agencies who work with the same clients, or have other over-laps. Wherever possible we went out and made our own direct observations.

We subjected all our household interviews to numerical analysis, to see how many people had raised each particular issue, and where the consensus seemed to lie, but we interpreted the results of that process qualitatively, and not quantitatively. We were asking people for their views on life in the region, and for statements about their need for various services. We did not prompt them unless it was absolutely unavoidable, but let them tell us what was important to them. We then interpreted those statements, watching for trends and consensus in people's views. Where we found those, and could see them fit into our other sources, we drew conclusions. Where we did not or could not, we drew no conclusions, or left the issue unresolved. A "significant number" of responses thus means enough responses to catch our attention, and enough reliability in the sources for us to believe what they were saying.

Clearly this process of analysis relies heavily on our judgement, and that will concern those who prefer more rigour and certainty. But our use of personal judgement in interpretation of our data is both inevitable and quite correct in a study of this kind. An "academic" level of rigour is only possible when events are viewed at a distance and over a long period of time. We are looking at the situation immediately and speedily, in order to develop remedies that will be effective in improving the situation. To achieve that, the community cannot wait for certainty.

We compensate for the uncertainty in two ways. First, we have used the community participation process to the fullest possible extent, to test ideas, to expose our conclusions as we were developing them, and to make sure that we were not getting too far off track. Secondly, we have tailored our recommendations to the degree of certainty that we were able to reach. Where we were sure of our conclusions, we have made strong recommendations for solutions to issues or improvements to services. Where we were less certain, we have recommended mechanisms for resolving issues in the communities,

or recommended evaluation of particular programs. Where we are very uncertain, we have tried to outline the issues, and suggest avenues for further exploration, but have made no recommendations.

Because of the variety of sources, the system of double-checks that we used, and the nature of our interviews, we are seldom able to identify the precise source of any particular conclusion. Most of the conclusions and recommendations are, in a very real and practical way, the outcome of the entire research method, not of one particular part of it. Thus we have normally stated our conclusions without reference to particular sources. Where one identifiable source was used, or where different sources clearly said different things, we have made special note.

CHAPTER II

REGIONAL GROWTH AND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

1. Population Growth

Table 1 (page 13) shows the population by municipality for the Study area from 1971 to 1980, with average percent rates of growth for 1979 to 1980, 1978 to 1980, 1976 to 1980 and 1971 to 1980. There is no generally accepted rule of thumb for deciding whether an area has experienced a "boom", but two have been suggested: a growth rate of 10% or more in a single year; or 5% per year for 3 years. By either of these criteria, the region has had a "boom".

Table 2 (page 14) shows the age-sex composition of the population in 1976, the most recent census year. Table 3 (page 15) estimates the age-sex composition of the population in 1980, using data from the City of Grande Prairie census, and assuming, on the basis of qualitative field observations, that recent migration has consisted mainly of young families and single people.

2. Economic Prospects for the Region

In November 1979 the Peace River Regional Planning Commission published the Grande Prairie Area Growth Study, analyzing the prospects for various economic sectors.*

(1) Agriculture

As in the rest of Alberta, the farm population in the County of Grande Prairie has been declining in recent years, because of an aging farm population and consolidation of farm units. Table 4 (page 16) shows the farm population in the County in the last four census years.

Although the prospects for agriculture in the region are judged to be reasonably good, there is no reason to predict large increases in numbers of people on commercial farms. Some increases may occur as retiring farmers are replaced by new ones with children, but the extent to which farm consolidation is continuing is not known.

* Hollinshead, Lefrancois & Associates, Grande Prairie Area Growth Study. Peace River Regional Planning Commission, Grande Prairie, November 1979.

TABLE 1

Population by Municipality, 1971 - 1980

Grande Prairie Region

	Population Numbers				Average % Rates of Growth					
	1971	1976	1977	1978	1979 to 1980	1978 to 1980	1976 to 1980	1971 to 1980		
City of Grande Prairie	13,233	17,626	17,626	18,429	20,427	22,718	11.2	11.0	6.5	6.2
County of Grande Prairie	8,496	9,147	9,147	9,147	9,898	11,269	13.9	NA	6.7	5.3
Beaverlodge	1,172	1,332	1,366	1,366	1,645	1,847	12.3	NA	8.5	5.2
Sexsmith	593	770	912	937	1,064	1,141	7.2	10.2	10.4	7.7
Wembley	372	507	507	608	835	1,119	34.0	35.7	21.9	13.0
Hythe	487	460	504	504	504	680	NA	NA	5.4	3.2
Total Region	24,353	29,842	30,062	30,991	34,373	38,774	NA	NA	6.7	5.3
City as Percent of Total	54.3	59.1			59.4	58.6				

Sources: 1971 and 1976 - Statistics Canada; 1978, 1979 and 1980 - Alberta Department of Municipal Affairs

NA = no census taken in base year.

Some comparisons with other Alberta centres - Average percent rates of growth:

Fort McMurray	1976-79	19 %
St. Albert	1971-76	15½%
St. Albert	1976-79	5½%
Red Deer	1976-79	7 %
Medicine Hat	1976-79	3½%

TABLE 2

Age-Sex Composition of Population by Municipalities - 1976

Grande Prairie Region

	Total	Male	Female	Age Ranges									
				0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
City of Grande Prairie	No. 17,626	8,830	8,800	10.6	9.5	9.8	11.1	12.9	17.3	10.1	7.4	5.1	6.3
	%												
County of Grande Prairie	No. 9,147	4,875	4,270	8.8	9.6	13.4	10.8	7.9	13.1	12.0	10.9	7.4	6.1
	%												
Beaverlodge	No. 1,332	665	670	10.0	8.9	8.9	9.3	9.6	14.8	10.7	7.4	9.3	11.1
	%												
Sexsmith	No. 770	395	370	10.4	10.4	11.7	8.4	9.1	18.2	9.7	7.8	5.8	8.4
	%												
Wembley	No. 507	270	240	13.7	11.8	12.7	8.8	10.8	16.7	9.8	6.9	3.9	4.9
	%												
Hythe	No. 460	240	225	7.7	7.7	8.8	7.7	5.5	9.9	8.8	8.8	9.9	25.3
	%												
Total Region	No. 29,842	15,275	14,575	10.0	9.5	10.9	10.8	11.0	15.8	10.7	8.5	6.1	6.7
	%												

Source: Statistics Canada
Totals may not add due to rounding.

TABLE 3

Estimated Age-Sex Composition of Population by Municipalities - 1980

Grande Prairie Region

	Total	Male	Female	Age Ranges									
				0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
City of Grande Prairie	% No.	50.8 22,718	49.2 11,175	10.7 2,430	8.1 1,840	8.3 1,885	11.7 2,655	13.5 3,065	18.2 4,135	10.6 2,405	7.8 1,770	5.4 1,225	5.8 1,315
County of Grande Prairie	% No.	53.0 11,269	47.0 5,295	9.5 1,070	9.7 1,095	12.8 1,440	10.7 1,205	8.8 990	14.0 1,580	11.6 1,305	10.2 1,150	6.9 780	6.0 675
Beaverlodge	% No.	50.8 1,847	49.2 910	10.2 185	8.7 160	8.8 160	9.9 180	10.6 195	15.7 290	10.7 195	7.5 140	8.3 150	9.8 180
Sexsmith	% No.	51.9 1,141	48.1 550	11.2 130	10.8 125	12.0 135	8.5 95	9.5 110	17.8 205	9.7 110	7.6 85	5.3 60	7.5 85
Wembley	% No.	52.9 1,119	47.1 525	13.7 155	11.8 130	12.7 140	8.8 100	10.8 120	16.7 185	9.8 110	6.9 75	3.9 45	4.9 55
Hythe	% No.	51.9 680	48.1 325	9.0 60	8.5 60	9.6 65	7.8 55	6.6 45	11.4 80	8.9 60	8.1 55	8.2 55	21.9 150
Total Region	% No.	51.6 38,774	48.4 19,990	10.4 4,030	8.8 3,410	9.9 3,825	11.1 4,290	11.7 4,525	16.7 6,475	10.8 4,185	8.4 3,275	6.0 2,315	6.3 2,460

Source: Derived from 1976 Census (Statistics Canada) and 1979 City of Grande Prairie Census, supplemented by field observations.
Totals may not add due to rounding.

TABLE 4

Farm Population, County of Grande Prairie - 1961 to 1976

Year	Number of Farms	Farm Population	
		Number	Average Per Farm
1961	1,984	7,166	3.6
1966	1,824	7,236	4.0
1971	1,673	5,947	3.6
1976	1,558	4,764	3.1

Source: Grande Prairie Area Growth Study

(2) Forestry

CANFOR and Procter and Gamble are the largest forestry employers in the area. Before opening of the new P&G sawmill, their employment capacities were as follows:

CANFOR	- Woodlands	100 people
	- Mill & Admin.	190
	- Plywood Plant	250
		<u>540 people</u>
Procter and Gamble	- Woodlands	245
	- Pulp Mill	550
		<u>795</u>
Total Both Firms		1,335 people

Source: Grande Prairie Area Growth Study

The new sawmill represents a 21% increase in employment capacity (280 people): 130 in woodlands operations and 150 in the mill itself. The Growth Study concludes (page 139) that this is "the maximum impact resulting from the new facility, and no further additions to employment are anticipated over the 15 year forecast". Prospects for expansion of CANFOR hinged on the results of the Berland Forest allocation, which went to another firm. "The prospect for expanded pulp facilities in Grande Prairie is considered to be remote in the medium term, given the slow growth in demand" (Growth Study, page 139.)

(3) The Oil and Gas Industry

Table 5 shows the employment effect of oil and gas exploration in the area in 1985, assuming 3 different "scenarios". At the time the growth study was prepared, 70 rigs were active in the area from township 57 to 80, west of the 6th meridian, with an estimated direct

employment of about 1,400 people. The Growth Study's industry sources estimated that over 1000 gas wells will be drilled in that area in the next 5 years. Drilling activity may fluctuate, however, in response to economic and political developments both nationally and internationally.

Table 6 shows the historical development of drilling activity in the more immediate County area, that is, from township 69 to 75, west of the 6th meridian.

TABLE 5
Employment Effect of Oil and Gas Development
Grande Prairie Area - Three 1985 "Scenarios"

	"Scenarios"		
	Low	Medium	High
Number of drilling rigs in the area	50	70	115
Number of rig workers	1,000	1,400	2,300
Number of local rig workers	600	700	900
Number of development service workers @ 10/rig	500	700	1,150
Number of local service workers	400	560	900
Estimated number of wells completed per year	250	350	575
Estimated number of gas plants	5	6	8
Number of local gas plant workers	100	120	160
Number of local well maintenance service employees	500	600	1,000
Total local workers	1,600	1,980	2,960
Workers in place	620	620	620
Total new labour requirements	980	1,360	2,340
Direct employment impact (increment)	980	1,360	2,340

Source: Grande Prairie Area Growth Study, Table 6.3.1

TABLE 6
Completed Oil and Gas Wells
Grande Prairie County Area* 1949-1979

<u>Year</u>	<u>Wells Finished Drilling</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Wells Finished Drilling</u>
1949	2	1964	10
1950		1965	4
1951		1966	1
1952		1967	2
1953	1	1968	1
1954	11	1969	6
1955	7	1970	8
1956	8	1971	5
1957	4	1972	20
1958	7	1973	30
1959	5	1974	23
1960	2	1975	9
1961	5	1976	10
1962	3	1977	55
1963	1	1978	108
		1979	143

* Townships 69 to 75, West of the 6th Meridian

Source: Energy Resources Conservation Board List of Wells.

(4) Other Economic Sectors

Agriculture, forestry and oil and gas are the primary economic sectors of the region. Activity in the other sectors — construction, manufacturing, retail and service, etc. will depend on the primary three. The total cumulative direct employment effect of both the primary and other sectors is given in Table 7 and the total direct and indirect effects in Table 8.

TABLE 7

Total Cumulative Direct Employment Effect
Grande Prairie Area — Three 1985 "Scenarios"

	"Scenarios"		
	Low	Medium	High
Gas and Oil Development	980	1,360	2,340
Procter and Gamble Sawmill	280	280	280
Construction	195	270	465
Grande Prairie Regional Hospital	160	160	160
Manufacturing (incl. Agriculture)	140	190	240
Sand and Gravel; Other Mining	120	170	290
Alaska Highway Gas Pipeline	3	3	3
New Basic Firms; Import Substitution	250	350	440
Total	2,128	2,783	4,218

Source: Growth Study, Table 9.2.1.

TABLE 8

Total Cumulative Direct and Indirect Employment Effect
Grande Prairie Area — Three 1985 "Scenarios"

	"Scenarios"		
	Low	Medium	High
Gas and Oil Development	1,450	2,015	3,465
Procter and Gamble Sawmill	450	450	450
Construction	315	435	750
Grande Prairie Regional Hospital	270	270	270
Manufacturing (incl. Agriculture)	240	330	415
Sand and Gravel; Other Mining	200	280	475
Alaska Highway Gas Pipeline	5	5	5
New Basic Firms; Import Substitution	410	570	720
Total	3,340	4,355	6,550

Source: Growth Study, Table 9.3.2.

(5) Total Population

The low, medium and high "scenarios" translate into rates of growth for the regional population. The population range given by the Growth Study for 1985 is 43,000 to 51,000, depending on the assumptions made about labour force participation and migration. The Growth Study's preferred prediction is about 46,000 for the total area.

Expressing these as percent rates of growth for the decade 1976 to 1985:

Low Estimate	- 4% per year;
High Estimate	- 6% per year;
Preferred Estimate	- 5% per year.

The average for the decade 1971 to 1980 was 5.3% per year. If repeated for 1976 to 1985, the population in 1985 would be 47,500. The first half of the decade, however, has seen a rate of 6.7%; thus to reach a rate of 5.3% for the decade would require the second half to be much slower.

Assuming that all the municipal population estimates for 1980 are correct (total = 38,800) it would seem that the Growth Study's projections are conservative. There is certainly no reason to expect that population will continue to grow at the very high rates of the past two years; neither is there any reason to anticipate a rate of only 2% or 3% from now until 1985, unless oil and gas drilling activity drops off very sharply and stays at a low level for five years, an unlikely eventuality. Our best estimate is that by 1985 the regional population will be somewhere between 48,000 and 50,000, that is, that growth for the 1976 to 1985 decade will average roughly between 5½% and 6%. Judging by past performance, growth will not be even, however, but will come in spurts at unpredictable intervals.

3. Predictions and Planning Strategy

Obviously none of these predictions is firm; all are based on strings of assumptions about local, provincial, national and international political and economic events, about labour force participation rates, about rates of migration, and so on. Many of these assumptions are only educated, fallible guesses. The results are crude, to say the least.

The importance of accuracy in a prediction depends on its purpose, and on the costs of error. If a prediction provokes action, and the prediction is wrong, then the action will be inappropriate. All predictions should therefore be biased according to the costs of the inappropriate action.

We will return to this issue at the end of the report.

CHAPTER III
THE REACTIONS OF PEOPLE TO POPULATION GROWTH
IN THE GRANDE PRAIRIE REGION

The purpose of this Chapter is to describe the broad social effects of recent developments in the Grande Prairie region, as revealed during this Study. From these will come the strategic recommendations of Chapter IV. Chapter V will analyse the individual components of the system of social services, and make specific recommendations. The last chapter will tie everything together and discuss implementation.

This Chapter is in two parts, the first dealing statistically with the characteristics of growth, and the second with the effects revealed through our household interviews.

A. The Dimensions of Growth

Table 1, page 13, shows the amount of growth experienced by regional communities in the recent past. Since 1976 the entire region has grown strongly (6.7% per year) with particularly dramatic increases in Wembley (21.9% per year) and Sexsmith (10.4% per year). The City has grown at 11.0% per year for the past two years. This resulted in new household formation as shown in Table 9.

TABLE 9
Household Creation - City of Grande Prairie - 1971 to 1979

<u>Year</u>	<u>Single Family Dwellings</u>	<u>Multiple Family Dwellings</u>	<u>Total Dwellings</u>
1971	241	88	329
1972	317	362	679
1973	273	182	455
1974	243	85	328
1975	215	38	253
1976	194	141	335
1977	297	140	437
1978	370	388	758
1979	619	657	1,276

Source: City of Grande Prairie, quoted in the Grande Prairie Statistical Profile.

Tables 2 and 3, pages 14 and 15, estimated age-sex characteristics of regional municipalities. These statistics are inferred from quantitative observations of trends, backed by recent census data where available. Both these sources indicate clearly that migration to the region features primarily young families and single persons, especially single males.

The data in Table 3 were derived from previously-made conclusions, for the purpose of estimating the numbers of people in different age categories, which is important for estimating demands for various kinds of service. But they contain some primary data, and these are noteworthy.

The City of Grande Prairie performed a census in 1980, in which numbers of children in various age groups and numbers of people aged 65 and more were counted, along with the total population. The data were flawed by non-response, but generally they indicate an increasing proportion of pre-school children (ages 0 to 4) and of adults aged 15 to 64. The proportion of school-aged children and of elders* dropped sharply since 1976, but the number of people in these categories increased.

For the most part, the demography of the regional communities, with the exception of Hythe, shows nothing too surprising. Hythe has a very high concentration of elders, because of the facilities built there for them.

Two perspectives on the population characteristics resulting from growth are given in Tables 10 and 11. Table 10 shows the length of time that our 196 sample households from the City have lived there; Table 11 shows the length of time businesses have been established. Both these show a similar pattern: a population that is primarily a mixture of very recent newcomers and residents of long tenure.

TABLE 10

Length of Residence of Sample Households - City of Grande Prairie

<u>Length of Residence</u>	<u>Households</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Less Than 1 Year	41	20.9
1- 3 Years	27	13.8
3- 5 Years	23	11.7
5-10 Years	41	20.9
More Than 10 Years	<u>64</u>	<u>32.7</u>
	196	100.0

* Wherever possible we avoid the euphemism "senior citizens". At the Workshop we used the term "old folks", but it was feared some would protest against the adjective. The term "elders" is both accurate and respectful; its dictionary definition (Oxford) is "persons of greater age; persons advanced in life". In some societies it connotes not only age, but also experience and wisdom.

TABLE 11

Establishment of Firms - All Businesses - 1979

	Number of Firms Established For:			
	Less Than 3 Years	3 to 5 Years	5 to 10 Years	10 Years or more
City of Grande Prairie	176	109	143	194
County of Grande Prairie	13	6	8	19
Beaverlodge	20	10	34	31
Sexsmith	15	5	4	12
Wembley	3	2	--	--
Hythe	10	3	7	11
Total	237	135	196	267

Source: Grande Prairie Area Growth Study, Table 3.3.1

Tables 12 and 13 show operating statistics for two important "boomtown" services: the Canada Employment Centre and the Salvation Army's Wapiti Lodge Men's Hostel. Both these services experienced very large increases in numbers of clients in 1979. Demands on the Canada Employment Centre (Table 13) have been reduced in 1980, but demands on Wapiti Lodge's facilities have increased yet further.

TABLE 12

Services Provided by Wapiti Lodge

	Total Monthly Beds			Total Monthly Meals		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
January	506	1274	1544	1651	5120	6138
February	362	1211	1581	1186	4741	5498
March	542	1447	1601	1428	5195	6185
April	584	1329	1547	1585	4958	6123
May	836	1553	1449	1978	5658	6152
June	736	1233	1506	2386	5443	6253
Sub-Total	3566	8047	9228	10214	31115	36349
July	765	1573		2828	5974	
August	903	1475		3439	5558	
September	1156	1433		3964	6362	
October	846	1509		2858	5869	
November	1092	1588		3490	6064	
December	1017	1591		3900	5938	
Total	9345	17216		30693	66880	
% Increase		+ 84.2	+14.7		+117.9	+16.8

Source: Wapiti Lodge

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TABLE 13

Grande Prairie Canada Employment Centre

Report of Registered Clients and Vacancies

	May June July 1978	September October November 1978	January February March 1979	May June July 1979	September October November 1979	January February March 1980	May June July 1980
Total Registered Vacancies at Month End	1321	1066	1163	2237	3113	1500	1749
Total Registered Clients	3619	2398	2922	4436	2045	1653	3146
Ratio of Month-End Vacancies to Registered Clients	0.37	0.44	0.40	0.50	1.53	0.91	0.56
Registered Clients Without Employment:							
Male	1719	1032	1437	2174	774	912	1597
Female	1736	1218	1359	2169	1178	653	1023
Total	3455	2250	2796	4343	1952	1565	2620
Registered Clients With Employment:							
Male	86	68	61	42	38	40	273
Female	78	80	65	51	55	48	253
Total	164	148	126	93	93	88	526

Source: Grande Prairie Canada Employment Centre

Table 14 shows the results of analysis of Wapiti Lodge's records for May of 1980, carried out by the Lodge in order to discover the origins of Clients.

TABLE 14
Patrons of Wapiti Lodge - May 1980

	<u>Claimed Place of Origin</u>	<u>Place of Birth</u>
Ontario	36	60
Newfoundland	0	2
Nova Scotia	3	11
New Brunswick	1	4
Prince Edward Island	0	0
Québec	29	56
Manitoba	2	4
Saskatchewan	6	12
Alberta	92	22
British Columbia	46	24
Other Countries	2	19
Not Stated	0	3
Total	217	217

Source: Wapiti Lodge

Not all agencies have experienced commensurate increases in demands for services. Table 15 summarizes operating statistics for the Grande Prairie Office of Alberta Mental Health Services, and Table 16 those for the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission, Grande Prairie Office. Neither shows large increases in caseloads; in fact, the Mental Health Services Office shows decreases. Some of that change reflects changes in operating methods within the Branch. Counsellors reported that they have been very busy throughout the "boom" period, but there is no sign of the kind of workload that has produced "burnout" in social service personnel in other "boom" situations.

We will return to the problem of interpreting the Mental Health statistics in Chapter V, Section A-4.

TABLE 15

Grande Prairie Office, Alberta Mental Health Services

Operating Statistics 1978 - 1980

	<u>January to June 1978</u>	<u>Total Year 1978</u>	<u>January to June 1979</u>	<u>Total Year 1979</u>	<u>January to June 1980</u>
Total Registrations:					
Grande Prairie Intown	324	636	300	505	118
% of Provincial Total	7.1	7.3	6.0	5.4	2.7
Total Mental Health Region*	569	1074	557	956	324
Total Terminations:					
Grande Prairie Intown	239	513	215	528	209
% of Provincial Total	5.8	6.2	5.0	6.0	4.9
Total M.H. Region	410	938	422	918	402
All Contacts:					
Grande Prairie Intown	3103	6255	3205	5626	1669
% of Provincial Total	6.3	6.5	5.5	5.1	3.0
Total M.H. Region	6404	12353	7059	12442	4737
Average Time (in Hours) for all Contacts:					
Grande Prairie Intown	.85	.78	.75	.73	.86
Total M.H. Region	.89	.85	.81	.81	.90
Face-to-Face Contacts:					
Grande Prairie Intown	1893	3525	1770	3198	1023
Total M.H. Region	3507	6369	3434	6274	2517

* Includes all of northwestern Alberta.

Source: Alberta Mental Health Services

TABLE 16

Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission, Grande Prairie

Average Monthly Clients in Treatment:

1978 - 41
1979 - 64
1980 - 61 (January to August)

Participants in the Impaired Driver Program:

1978 - 354
1979 - 381
1980 - 249 (8 months; annual rate of 373)

Source: A.A.D.A.C., Grande Prairie

Finally, Table 17 summarizes statistics on crime, reported by the Grande Prairie office of the R.C.M.P. Of particular importance are the statistics on criminal offences and traffic accidents, since these reflect actual changes in events in the communities, and do not change with the patrolling methods and priorities of the police. If an offence or an accident is reported, it is put into the statistics. In contrast, for example, the drop in Liquor Act offences probably reflects changes in policing, rather than an increase in respect for the law among landlords and drinkers. The increases in criminal offences and traffic accidents are striking — 44.2% and 41.2% respectively — in the first six months of 1980.

Table 18 analyses the major types of criminal offences in the City. The concerns of businessmen over increasing business break-and-enter offences appear to be justified, with an average of one incident every two nights. Residential break-and-entries have also increased, but the probability that a home will be broken into is still quite low. The increase in sexual offences was commented on during the recent municipal election campaign, but these are still rare occurrences, according to these statistics. Some people argue, however, that many sexual offences go unreported. We have no information about that.

TABLE 17
Crime Statistics

	1st 6 Months 1980	1st 6 Months 1979	Total Year 1979	Total Year 1978	Total Year 1977
GRANDE PRAIRIE CITY:					
Total Criminal Offences	1593	1105	2782	2299	2134
Percent Change	+44.2		+21.0	+7.7	
Percent Cleared	35	38	34	42	47
Sexual Offences	13	5			
Assaults	102	97			
Robbery	5	3			
Break and Enter - Total	182	92	277	204	215
- Residential	64	43			
- Business	96	26			
Motor Vehicle Theft	94	57			
Theft of more than \$200	157	96	240	172	124
Theft of less than \$200	515	336			
Fraud	105	63			
Offensive Weapons	8	8			
Percent of Dwellings Suffering Residential Break-and-Enter	0.85	0.63			
Other Offences and Incidents:					
Federal Drug Offences	76	65	159	121	152
Liquor Act	673	852	1719	1428	1177
All Traffic Accidents	894	501	1209	724	NA
Traffic Charges	3381	2394	4488	5039	NA
% Change, Traffic Accidents	+41.2		+67.0		
GRANDE PRAIRIE RURAL:					
Total Criminal Offences	229	172	428	297	303
Percent Change	+33.1		+44.1	-2.0	
Federal Drug Offences	6	3	14	18	34
Total Traffic Accidents	327	286	690	394	274
Total Traffic Charges	1562	1294	3059	2474	2040
% Change, Traffic Accidents	+20.7		+75.1	+43.8	

Source: Grande Prairie R.C.M.P.

TABLE 18

Analysis of Crime Statistics

Grande Prairie City, January - June, 1979 and 1980

	1980		1979		Percent Change
	Number	Percent of Criminal Offences	Number	Percent of Criminal Offences	
Theft, L.T. \$200	515	32.2	336	30.4	53.3
Theft, G.T. \$200	157	9.9	96	8.7	63.5
Fraud	105	6.6	63	5.7	66.7
Assaults	102	6.4	97	8.8	5.2
Business B&E	96	6.0	26	2.4	269.2
Motor Vehicle Theft	94	5.9	57	5.2	64.9
Residential B&E	64	4.0	43	3.9	48.8
Sexual Offences	13	.8	5	.5	160.0
Other	447	28.1	382	34.6	17.0
Total	1593	100.0	1105	100.0	44.2

B. The Reactions to Rapid Growth

1. The Location of Major Effects

Table 1's population statistics (see page 13) ranked the communities in the following order, according to the amount of growth they have experienced:

1979-1980 rates of change:	1. Wembley
	2. County of Grande Prairie
	3. Beaverlodge
	4. City of Grande Prairie
	5. Sexsmith
	Hythe - no 1979 data

1976-1980 rates of change	1. Wembley
	2. Sexsmith
	3. Beaverlodge
	4. County of Grande Prairie
	5. City of Grande Prairie
	6. Hythe

On the basis of those statistics we would anticipate that effects would be felt throughout the region, with intensity depending on the actual rates of growth — highest in Wembley, lowest in Hythe.

Our observations do not support that prediction. People in the smaller hamlets and farming areas of the County seem to have felt little effect at all, except for some increase in traffic on the back roads, and for the effects they noticed when they came to town. The general impression left by Beaverlodge and Hythe was that they are frankly enjoying their growth, after many years of stagnant or declining populations, and that any disadvantages are more than compensated for by the arrival of new, young families. Many of the "new" people are in fact former residents, who grew up there and had moved away. This has eased the problem of integrating the new families into the communities, but we still heard some concern expressed about the possible development of resentments between old-timers and newcomers.

In Sexsmith and Wembley we did see some of that resentment, and found new families encountering the usual problems of settling into a new community. Commercial and recreational facilities have, to some extent, not kept up with population growth, but people are able to go to Grande Prairie, and did not find the shortages unduly distressing, it seems.

Perhaps the situation can be summed up this way: the physical and "mechanical" difficulties created by growth and the arrival of new people are much the same wherever growth has occurred, and depend on the amount of growth. But the emotional effect has been

much stronger in the City. We can identify some of the reasons for this, beyond the obvious fact that the numbers of people involved are much greater.

First, the City, unlike the smaller centres, has been the gathering ground for "transients", a conspicuous group of people whose activities are resented by many. Second, people in the City have been a good deal more worried about increases in crime. Third, the people in the smaller centres can make up many of the deficiencies in services in their home communities by going to the City, which is nearby. Those in the City who find services deficient have no alternative, other than an expensive trip to Edmonton. Fourth, the fact that the smaller centres are small eases the process of establishing the kinds of neighbourhood relationships that make people feel at home. It may well be that the City has grown to the point where, when rapid growth comes along, people soon develop that feeling of urban isolation usually associated with much larger centres. Fifth, the City is the service centre for the entire region, and many of the expressions of concern heard by social service agencies may be coming from all over the area, but are expressed in offices in the City, and are lumped in with the City reaction. And sixth, the smaller centres seem to offer less opportunity for young people to get into serious trouble, or perhaps simply their young people come to the City and get into trouble there.

2. Groups Affected

On page 22 we showed statistics on the lengths of people's residence in Grande Prairie, indicating a mixture of recent newcomers with long-established households. The distribution of rapid-growth effects matched this pattern: newcomers were having more difficulties than the well-established families, especially those who bought homes before prices increased. Among other groups that experienced more drastic effects were elderly people; renters on fixed or moderate incomes; people living in the downtown part of the City; people recently buying homes for the first time; single parents; and youths of both sexes.

We will discuss these groups in more detail in Chapter V.

This is a very clear and important finding of this Study: there are many people in Grande Prairie who have not been seriously affected by the "boom", who may find some sources of irritation in the situation, but who certainly have not experienced any major problems. Many in fact have found the new growth almost delightful, since it has brought them more money and improved services.

3. Irritants and Daily Hassles

Unquestionably, rapid growth has brought a number of irritants and daily hassles into people's lives. Among the most often mentioned

were traffic, parking, wild and inconsiderate drivers, obstructions due to road and other construction, noise, dirt, mud, line-ups, etc. These deserve to be considered as irritants, and for some people they may be significant, but they cannot be considered as major social problems. (Although one prominent citizen informed us that he thought traffic in the City was a major social problem!)

To some extent the parking problem can be attributed to people's attempts to retain small-town parking habits in a growing city. It is aggravated by the fact that parking downtown is seriously under-priced: 10¢ per hour and a \$2.00 fine for violation is a price that bears no relation to the value of the service, and does not encourage people to leave their cars outside the downtown area.

4. Crime

In all parts of the City people expressed concern about increases in crime. Not only has crime increased significantly, but according to some informants, the amount of attention given to crime by the local newspapers and radio stations has increased, at least partly due to the R.C.M.P.'s community relations program. It is difficult to keep people better informed about the activities of the police without making them more aware of crime.

All this has made many people wary, and some fearful, of crime. Old people, especially living alone in the central part of the City, have become very concerned. Some of these have been victims of vicious pranks by youngsters, which further increases their anxiety.

One striking feature of criminal activity, however, is that it is heavily dominated by crimes against property, not crimes against persons. Grande Prairie is not a violent place. It may be a less safe place to leave your car or house unlocked, and general improvements to household and business security may be prudent, but muggings, rapes, assaults, armed robbery and crimes of that type are still quite rare.

One form of violence that may be increasing under "boom" pressures is wife-beating. Our data are not sufficient to establish any trends firmly, but incidents seem often to be associated with family financial trouble, and provoked by drinking. Concern over battered wives and their children was one of the forces that led to establishment of the Croken House Women's Hostel.

5. Living Costs

One of the most frequent complaints of our informants was living costs, which have risen sharply as a result both of general

and local inflation.

The extent of general inflation can be seen from the following consumer price indices for the City of Edmonton:

Food Price Index	- up 9.0% from June 1979 to June 1980;
Shelter Price Index	- up 8.1%; from June 1979 to June 1980;
All Items Price Index	- up 9.6%;
(Source: Statistics Canada)	

The extent of local inflation can be seen from the spatial price indices for the City of Grande Prairie, based on prices in June of 1979 and 1980. These express Grande Prairie average prices as a ratio of Edmonton's (Edmonton = 100). The results this year were (Source: Alberta Bureau of Statistics):

Food	= 105, up from 100 in 1979;
Dairy	= 102, down from 104;
Baking	= 102, no change;
Fats and Oils	= 99, down from 102;
Meat and Fish	= 102, down from 110;
Fruits and Vegetables	= 111, up from 95;
Frozen foods	= 101, down from 103;
Restaurant Meals	= 112, up from 101;
Shelter	= not released; preliminary statistics suggest a small increase, but average costs close to Edmonton's;
Household Operations	= 127, no comparison with 1979 available;
All Items	= 105, up from 104 in 1979

In total, therefore, it appears that Grande Prairie's prices have not risen much faster than Edmonton's, but food, shelter and household operations, all especially important items in budgets for lower-income people, and items that people must purchase locally, have increased faster than in Edmonton. Not all food items have increased in relation to Edmonton's prices, however: the increase in the food index seems to come almost entirely from sharp increases in fruits and vegetables, and restaurant meals.

Table 19 shows statistics on apartment rents and vacancy rates in Grande Prairie and Beaverlodge in August 1980. To no one's surprise, rents are high and vacancy rates low.

TABLE 19
Apartment Vacancies and Rental Costs

	<u>City of Grande Prairie</u>	<u>Town of Beaverlodge</u>	<u>All Small Alberta Cities</u>
Estimated No. of Suites	1,573	50	15,442
Response Rate to Survey(%)	99.6	100.0	98.5
Number Vacant	21	0	865
Vacancy Rate(%)	1.3	0.0	5.7
Rents - Average and Range:			
Bachelor Suites	- avg. \$269	--	\$205
	- range 210-385	--	20-385
One Bedroom	- avg. 359	\$234	261
	- range 125-535	170-355	30-700
Two Bedroom	- avg. 411	351	316
	- range 235-630	160-425	100-630
Three Bedroom	- avg. 477	463	354
	- range 341-750	450-475	130-750
Four or more	- avg. 420	--	355
	- range 420	--	130-585

Historical Vacancy Rates:

1979	0.2	0.0	NA
1978	1.1	0.0	NA
1977	6.7	0.0	NA
1976	2.4	0.0	NA
1975	0.3	0.0	NA

Source: Alberta Housing and Public Works, Results of Apartment Vacancy and Rental Cost Survey, August 1980.

The following data on average residential house prices were given in a report on living costs in Grande Prairie, prepared for Alberta Mental Health Services (see item in Bibliography, Appendix C, under Wald, B.):

Grande Prairie	- 1979: average house price = \$69,721
	- 1978: = 51,551
Edmonton	- 1979: = \$78,839
	- 1978: = \$71,779

It is obvious that house prices have increased rapidly, although the levels reached do not seem to be high in relation to house prices in Edmonton. The groups particularly hurt by high accommodation costs are elderly renters on fixed incomes, and single parents. This creates significant difficulties for both these groups.

We commonly heard the view that merchants, developers and landlords have been taking excessive advantage of the local situation; that while some price increases are inevitable during rapid growth, there was no reason for prices to go as high, as fast as they did in Grande Prairie. The merchants, developers and landlords reply that their costs are high too. We do not have the data to resolve this question, one way or the other.

6. Other Sources of Economic Pressure

In addition to living costs, we observed two additional sources of economic pressure on households. One is the community's high standards of expenditure. This is a qualitative observation; we did not examine spending habits in detail, and can provide no comparisons with other communities. Grande Prairie may not be unusual in this respect. But we did observe people moving from lower-cost housing in the older parts of town to more expensive homes in the new areas; a large number of multi-vehicle households; a large number of boats, motor homes; etc.

A second source of pressure is particularly related to rapid growth. "Boom" towns bring high wages, especially to people in construction. The whole community becomes very money-conscious, and stories circulate of people of modest skill making large incomes. These stories, true or not, become benchmarks against which some people measure their own earnings, and if they fall short, these people often feel pressure to catch up. They may try to do this by changing jobs, by seeking a second family income, by working longer hours, or simply by increasing their expenditures, in the hope that they will catch up later. Regardless of the method used, the pressure on earners and the household in general increases.

7. Physical Planning

One source of stress in long-established communities that begin to grow very fast is that methods of physical planning, and the plans themselves, that used to be appropriate, become no longer so. It almost becomes necessary to re-design the community, and that is very difficult, if not impossible. In Grande Prairie, for example, the City has grown around the downtown area, which functioned in many ways as a total community centre. Now, increasingly, the downtown is confined to commercial activity and some of the more

harum-scarum forms of recreation. This has left the community without a centre in which to walk about, meet neighbours, carry on casual conversations, and so on. The Prairie Mall cannot really fill the gap.

Some recent planning decisions have been viewed with concern by some residents. For example, the juxtaposition of large rental units with established single-family neighbourhoods is viewed with considerable alarm by many house-owners. Construction of neighbourhoods without proper play areas (sidewalks, grass verges, parks, playgrounds, etc.) encourages children to wander and increases their parents' anxiety. The whole south side of the City is remote from proper shopping facilities, so that until public transportation is available, residents must buy a second car, walk long distances through areas not designed for pedestrian travel, or shop at neighbourhood stores that are considered to be inferior and expensive.

8. Unwelcome Visitors

Another significant source of distress to people has been the presence of large numbers of young men employed in oilfield and construction work, who use the downtown area as a recreation ground. To a significant extent they contribute to the traffic and parking problems of the downtown business district. They attract drug dealers, prostitutes and other undesirable followers. They attract local young people of both sexes, and are perceived to present a particular risk to gullible or imprudent young women.

It is unfortunate that in the City of Grande Prairie, they have been allowed to dominate the downtown area to such an extent. Some of that is simply because of the location of the Park and York Hotels and two of the theatres. Some is because the RCMP, preoccupied with immediately pressing criminal cases and traffic accidents, have not been able to patrol the streets as well as they would like.

This has created an odd sense of policing priorities in the downtown area. It is somewhat ironic to see the Commissionaires going their rounds, ticketing parking-meter violators, while around them boils a lively and sometimes questionable turbulence. To point this out is not to criticize the RCMP, whose manpower is stretched to the limit. It is a by-product of compartmentalization in the police system, since the RCMP, who have primary responsibility for policing the community, cannot divert the Commissionaires to other, more important policing tasks.

Although the unwelcome visitors are considered by many to be a great nuisance, they are very necessary to the plans of the community. It is not possible to have a "boom" without them.

9. Job-Seeking Migrants

Another group of people mixed in with the recreating workers and their followers are often referred to as "transients": that is, the migrants who have come to the community seeking work. These generally are of two kinds, the "professional transients" or drifters, and those honestly seeking work and a new start. They are, justly or unjustly, viewed with considerable alarm by many people in the community.

The large number of these people that has come to Grande Prairie in the recent past has strained facilities to the limit and beyond, as Table 12 (Services Provided by Wapiti Lodge, page 23) showed. Wapiti Lodge has been filled to capacity almost constantly since May of 1979. Croken House began operation in the summer of 1980. It was not used to capacity at first, but began to fill regularly by September.

Those who could not obtain places in hostels stayed wherever they could. For a time the hall of St. Joseph's Church was opened for emergency shelter, but closed again because of difficulties with the clientele. The Rotary Campground near the College was available for a time, until accumulating garbage and mounting community concern forced its closure. Many people simply slept in cars. Some women were able to find accommodation with men, a questionable expedient in the minds of many people.

One group of migrants who experienced particular difficulties, often simply as a result of language problems, were the French-Canadians, of whom there were a significant number during the time of the Study.

10. Newcomers

As Table 10 (page 22) shows, many new residents have come to Grande Prairie, and their reactions to the community vary. Some have fitted in quickly and well. Some, particularly from major urban centres, find Grande Prairie's shopping and entertainment lacking. (This is in contrast to the usual reaction of longer-term residents, who generally applauded recent improvements in commercial services.) Some have found it an unfriendly place, and believe they have been "cold-shouldered" by the longer-term residents. The rights and wrongs of these situations are often difficult to judge.

Newcomers, especially those who have not moved often before, find the loss of practical neighbourhood and family support particularly distressing. Getting to know the neighbours and make new friends, find baby sitters, etc. takes time, and until a family has settled in, everyone is under extra stress.

Among the newcomers are a certain number of experienced migrants

whose jobs keep them on the move. When significant numbers of these come from one industry, they develop their own system of support, and help each other out. An example of this is the Oil Wives Club.

11. Pressures on Youth

Young people of junior-high and high-school age were often mentioned as a group that has been affected by recent changes in the City. Some of the pressures on young people are the ones they feel everywhere: merchandising pressure, peer pressure, and the usual pressures of adolescence. These are supplemented by some that come with the present economic situation. For example, young people are subjected to pressure to take jobs, either directly from employers seeking help, from parents seeking more household income, or through comparison with their job-holding, moneyed peers. Drugs have become more available, and are more widely used. Young girls are subjected to sexual advances from older men with money and all the facilities at their disposal. Parents are preoccupied with their own jobs and activities, and lack time for their children, a factor that is multiplied for the children of single parents.

Probably all young people in the community feel these pressures, but clearly many of them, because of personal or family strength, cope very well. The area is rich in activities for the youngster who wants to get into them. But clearly also, those who wish to hang about downtown, join the "street", or get into mischief, will find plenty of opportunity for that.

It is difficult to separate the young people in the City from those in the out-lying areas. Because many of them have transportation, the delights of the City are nearly as available to the rural youths as to the City's, whether those delights are constructive and educational activities, or some of the more dubious ones.

12. Family, Neighbourhood and Community Life

We can think of these three social institutions — the family, the neighbourhood and the community — as existing in a complex of forces, some of which work to draw people together: that is, which lead to strengthening of the institutions, and some of which pull people apart, and weaken them. Those that pull together are a sense of common interest, of knowing other people, and of caring about them. Cultivation of the knowing and caring requires time and effort. In a stable, "normal" economic and social situation, people are able to take the time and make the effort; the building and nurturing of these relationships can be carried on to whatever extent the individual wants. A person may or may not want to make the effort, but at least the situation is not working against it.

When rapid population growth comes along the situation changes, and in Grande Prairie we can see the details of how that works against the sense of common interest, the knowing and the caring. We should again point out, however, that although we are describing forces that tend to loosen family, neighbourhood and community ties, we do not wish to suggest that any part of the region is in a state of social collapse. As was noted earlier, many households are living much as they always have done, and are not feeling particularly distressed.

But others are feeling under pressure, and many newcomers are finding it difficult to establish themselves in the community.

Increases in living costs are perhaps the most important stress-creating factor, and work to divide people. First, we found many people who believe that the merchants, landlords and developers are "ripping off" the community, and find it difficult to feel a sense of community with them. That feeling may be unjust, but it is there. Second, households who are under economic pressure are forced to take actions — second incomes, longer shifts, etc. — that reduce the amount of time and energy they have to do things for each other, to get to know their neighbours, and to take part in community events.

The increasing pace of life is another divisive influence. Some of this stems directly from economic activity, as people's jobs keep them busier and away from their families, their homes and their community. Some stems from the increased traffic and other daily hassles which people must now contend with.

Both costs and pace can be divisive for any household, but are particularly serious for newcomers to the community, who need time to find their way around, to become involved with activities, to work their way into the established community, and to build up the networks of personal acquaintances that serve the longer-term residents so well.

To some extent the demands of family life conflict with neighbourhood and community life, at least as these are often organized now. Strong family life requires that families do things together, but many neighbourhood and community activities work to keep them apart, either by segregating participants by age and sex, or by requiring large amounts of adult time for organization. In order to be "good community people", many adults must neglect their families, a problem towards which the planners of activities are generally quite unsympathetic.

The results of weakened family, neighbourhood and community ties are significant both for the stability of people's lives and for the services they require. First, whatever trend becomes established is self-reinforcing. If the trends lean toward strengthened institutions, then people orient themselves more and more

around them, and the institutions are further strengthened. If the institutions are eroding, then people's faith in them weakens, and the erosion is reinforced.

Second, weakening of these institutions contributes directly to stress, by weakening networks of personal support. People rely on their families, friends and neighbours for all kinds of informal support: baby-sitting, help in emergencies, informal child-minding, sidewalk-shovelling, house-minding during absences, pet-feeding, and so on and on. Many of these services cannot be replaced by hired services or public agencies, or can be replaced only at great cost. Some of the requests for improved service that we heard were aimed at replacement of these informal, "neighbourhood" services.

Third, weakening of these institutions contributes directly to turnover of people, and continued turnover will be costly to Grande Prairie in many ways. Money alone will not attract permanent residents; it tends, in fact, to attract people who come simply to make their stake, and who will soon move on. Grande Prairie must compete with the rest of Alberta for people, and can gain a competitive advantage by cultivating its reputation as "a good place to raise a family". People are still coming to the area because of that reputation, but many are unhappy with what they have found, and are planning to move on.

CHAPTER IV

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this Chapter are "strategic" in the sense that they form the main components, the framework that Grande Prairie's regional communities ought to use in responding to the conditions created by rapid growth. The recommendations in Chapter V for the specific sectors of the social services system will then fit onto this strategic framework.

We will begin by outlining the complete strategy for the City of Grande Prairie. As the largest regional centre, it requires the most elaborate strategy. We will then discuss how much of this is relevant to each smaller centre, and the extent to which each component of the strategy can be adapted to small-community life.

A. The City of Grande Prairie

For the City, we recommend implementation of a six-part strategy featuring:

1. Coordination of services by means of committees containing representatives of agencies and the general public.
2. Redefinition of the terms of reference for physical planning of new neighbourhoods and the community as a whole.
3. A program to help strengthen family life.
4. A "Know Your Neighbours" Program.
5. A coordinated approach to management of services to migrants.
6. A Cost of Living Program.

1. Coordination of Services

The system of services in the City, as the detailed sectoral analyses in Chapter V will show, has two major characteristics. First, it is very large and diverse, with a wide range of agencies and services catering to many needs. Second, it is highly compartmentalized, in that specialized agencies tend each to supply a fairly narrow range of services. Coordination among these, where it exists at all, is usually ad hoc and informal.

Coordination can be achieved through three general methods:

- (i) Appointment of a "czar", a person or agency with authority to coordinate. This is the strongest, most effective and most controversial method of coordination.
- (ii) Designation of a lead agency, without formal coordinating authority, but able to lobby, prod, persuade, influence, or provoke other agencies into moving in a particular direction. This is a middle-of-the-road solution.
- (iii) Creation of opportunities for self-coordination and exchange of information among agencies, through some form of committee structure. This is a relatively weak form of coordination, since member agencies are still free to go their own way if they choose, but it can be effective. It is usually non-controversial.

The method that we are suggesting for Grande Prairie is a combination of the second and third methods. The structure would be a set of committees, as in the third method, but each committee would have a "lead agency" responsible for making sure that the committee has the practical and administrative support that it needs to function effectively, and that continuity of the committee's work is maintained. Three forms of committee are available:

(1) Community Service Planning Boards

A community service planning board is a generic term that describes a board bringing together agency personnel, elected officials and citizens at large. It is usually created by by-law or other legislation, by inter-municipal or inter-governmental agreement, or by some combination of these. Many operate in Grande Prairie now: Health Unit Board, Recreation Board, School Boards, P.S.S. Board, Library Board, Hospital Boards, Municipal Planning Commissions, etc. The essential feature of a community service planning board is that some senior agency — a municipality or the Provincial Government, for example — has authorized the committee to do its work, and the committee is accountable to that senior agency.

(2) Planning Committees

A planning committee is similar in structure and purpose to a planning board, but without the formal legitimacy created by the by-law or other legislation, and without the direct accountability. They are formed simply by mutual agreement among the members of the committee. Permanent planning committees seem to be fairly rare in Grande Prairie, but an example is the Ministerial Association.

(3) Project Committees

Project committees are ad hoc groups called together at the initiative of some agency for the purpose of planning some particular project, or resolving some particular issue. That work done, they disband.

The decision on which form of committee to use will depend on the purpose at hand. Creation of a planning board is a clear signal that the committee has permanent work to do and that someone, the body that sets it up, expects that work to be done. Planning committees are suitable when there is permanent work, but where circumstances do not require it to be formally legitimized. Project committees are for short-term work.

In general, we recommend more formality, wherever possible. The history of communication and coordination through committees that do not have formal legitimacy has not been a good one. If the committee is formally accountable to City Council or some other body, then the community can be reasonably sure that its work will continue, despite the inevitable changes in personnel and priorities of individual agencies. If that accountability is lacking, then committees tend to fade away.

But we recognize that creation of a large number of new boards may not be feasible or politically acceptable in the short term. In recommending forms for committees, we will clearly identify those cases where formality is necessary, and where it can be conveniently dispensed with, at least for the time being.

2. Physical Planning

The central agency for physical planning for the regional municipalities is the Peace River Regional Planning Commission. Individual municipalities have Municipal Planning Commissions, and draw on the Regional Planning Commission for technical services.

Physical planning is a process of negotiation between land owner/developers and the municipality, and thus it is sometimes difficult to maintain a consistent planning philosophy. Two principles seem to be generally in evidence, however:

(1) Economy. Land is usually developed so as to get as many salable pieces out of it as possible, and to keep servicing costs low.

(2) Segregation. Different types of users of land are usually kept apart, as much as possible, by assigning blocks of land to industrial, commercial, single-family residential, multi-family residential, recreational, etc. purposes. A more integrated system has evolved in some older areas, with apartment buildings mixed in with single-family dwellings. Other older areas have gone beyond

that to heavy concentrations of apartment buildings, and some of these are being deliberately established in new areas.

As long as municipalities rely on private developers, planning by negotiation will continue. Those municipalities who are able and willing to undertake their own development will have much more control over planning.

Physical planning is not an end in itself, but is intended to serve broader social, economic and aesthetic purposes. To do this successfully requires good linkage between the physical planners and other groups active in the community. Creation of a City Social Planning Department and Committee of Aldermen would be one way to achieve this. In principle, the bringing together of physical planners and social planners under one administration would be constructive. But in the Grande Prairie situation, with its complex of specialized agencies, it is difficult to see what the role of the social planners would be, other than to talk to the physical planners. If the social planners were to function effectively they would need a clear purpose in the system of services, and one that was generally accepted by all the other agencies.

We think that linkage between physical and social planners can be achieved without creation of a new municipal agency, by creation of planning boards or committees for particular program functions, and by including the physical planners in those groups. The physical planners could be represented by members of the Municipal Planning Commission, either lay or technical people, or both, depending on the circumstances. We will make specific recommendations for including the MPC on the various committees as we go along.

In addition, there needs to be a mechanism for receiving input to planning decisions from social service agencies and organizations. The responsibility for developing that mechanism seems to rest with the Municipal Planning Commission.

* RECOMMENDATION: That the Municipal Planning Commission
* develop procedures for obtaining input to planning
* decisions from social service boards and committees, and
* individual agencies where appropriate, and that their
* input be routinely sought;

* That in particular, decisions on the
* design of new neighbourhoods, and changes to existing
* neighbourhoods, receive input from the Recreation Board,
* the Family Life Committee, the Child Development and
* Youth Services Committee, the Elders' Committee, and
* the Handicapped Persons Committee.

Other recommendations on physical planning will be made during discussion of particular programs and sectors of the social services system.

One objection often raised against elaboration of the process of physical planning, is that decisions are thereby slowed down. And so they are, but that is not necessarily a flaw. Perhaps planning decisions are often made too fast now, especially considering the importance of those decisions, and the effective permanence of their results. If delays are necessary to good planning, then they should be allowed for, by starting planning earlier, and thinking ahead.

3. Family Life Program

Despite the fact that Grande Prairie has many strong families, family life is under pressure from a number of directions. Economic pressure frequently requires both parents to work. The pace of economic activity keeps parents working long hours, and drains their energy. Community activities need volunteer help; parents are under pressure to spend time helping the schools, recreational programs, churches, service clubs, etc. Their children would like that time too, but are not nearly as skillful at applying the pressure needed to get it. Few activities are organized with full-family participation in mind; generally the emphasis is on segregation by age and sex. The closest that most activities come to family participation is achieved either through the parents acting as leaders or coaches for children's activities, or through one parent acting as chauffeur. Finally, some families are under internal pressure from differing, unreconciled personal points of view, for example, between husbands and wives, between parents and teen-aged offspring.

The effects of weakened family life are familiar and are particularly damaging to children. Many cases of juvenile unhappiness can be traced to deficient family life; some of the reactions of young people to their home situation both weaken it further, and further damage the young people themselves.

Single parents have particular difficulty maintaining a strong and healthy home life. They can succeed, and some do, but they must work much harder, and they need more help.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That the Preventive Social Services Board
- * develop a coordinated Family Life Program, with a Family
- * Life Committee, and a full-time Family Life Coordinator.
- * The purposes would be to promote whole-family life and activities at all levels of the community, with particular immediate
- * priority on increasing opportunities for whole-family activity
- * in the Parks and Recreation system, and to encouraging a
- * family-life perspective in the new Parks and Recreation Master
- * Plan. Other activities where a whole-family emphasis could be
- * fostered are further education (SCORES), the Public Library, and
- * Churches.

By "whole-family life and activities" we mean, ideally, all members of family units spending time and "doing things" together. A lesser but often satisfactory variation has one parent active with some or all of the children.

The idea behind this recommendation is simple: if family life is important to the community, then it deserves to be actively supported. We are suggesting that the priorities of parents should be to do things with their children, and that a priority of the community should be actively to assist them. This may mean that some organizations, who have relied on parents as volunteers, but who do not provide opportunities for joint activities, will have more difficulty finding volunteers.

Nothing in this recommendation takes any choices away from parents. They can still manage their family life as they wish. It simply puts some of the resources and attention of the community directly behind those who seek to build a strong, unified family life. There are many pressures against family life; this program would exert some pressure for it.

There are many agencies who could contribute to the Family Life Committee; among them are:

- Alberta Mental Health Services
- Peace Counselling
- School Boards
- Service Clubs
- Health Unit (South Peace Planned Parenthood)
- Parks and Recreation Board
- Ministerial Association and individual churches
- District Office of Alberta Social Services
- S.C.O.R.E.S.
- Library Board
- Parents

The role of the Committee would be to guide the Program, to work with the Family Life Coordinator and P.S.S., and to work directly with agencies and other community organizations.

We recommended earlier (page 44) that the Family Life Committee should be consulted about physical planning decisions. Much can be done with the design, location and scheduling of facilities and activities to make whole-family participation easier. Some opportunities might be: more time and more convenient times for family swimming and ice skating; development of an outdoor family skating rink, perhaps on the Bear Creek reservoir; organization of family soft-ball; placement of small mini-parks and public lawn areas in neighbourhoods.

We mentioned above that single parents particularly need extra help maintaining strong family life. The Family Life Committee, in its advocacy of whole-family activities, should make sure that these are organized so that single parents can take advantage of them. Further attention to the problems of single parents should be given by the P.S.S. Special Groups Program (see Chapter V, Section A-1).

4. "Know Your Neighbours" Program

A significant number of people in interviews said that they did not know their neighbours, or commented otherwise on the effects of turnover among residents. Some informants were newcomers who were having difficulty meeting their neighbours, others were longer term residents distressed at the constant movement around them.

Good neighbourhood contacts improve people's sense of being "at home" in a community, and thus make them more inclined to stay. They reduce demands for service too, since neighbours can help each other out in many small but essential ways.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That the City develop a non-commercial
- * welcoming service, using volunteer help, to greet newcomers
- * to the City; to provide them with information about services,
- * facilities, etc.; to find out about the interests and needs
- * for service of newcomers, to refer them to the appropriate
- * agencies, and to follow up any expressions of interest with
- * the appropriate people, and to notify the newcomer's
- * neighbours.

The only welcoming service now is the commercial Welcome Wagon. Its coverage seems to be spotty and little follow-up is performed after the initial interview. The City would be the appropriate agency to provide this service, since the arrival of a newcomer is an important event to the City, and since it has access to sources of information about new arrivals: its own water accounts; Alberta Government Telephones; Alberta Power; etc.

The volunteer work necessary to provide this service would fit in nicely with the family life emphasis, since the visiting required could be undertaken by family groups. A modest amount of coordination would be required at City Hall.

A supplementary idea would be to stage a major "get to know your neighbours" event once per year, as long as rapid growth continues. This could be an event in itself (the Mayor declares "Get to Know Your Neighbour Week" with accompanying hoop-la) or tied to some other major community event. Block parties and other events designed to bring neighbours together could be designed and supported. The coordination of this activity could appropriately be performed by the service clubs and churches.

Physical planning is important to the encouragement of active neighbourhood life. If people are to meet together, places where that can happen must be provided.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That the layout and facilities of future
- * housing developments be planned to encourage contacts among
- * neighbours, through street design and the placing of houses,
- * though allowance for meeting places (halls, parks, etc.)
- * and through the placing of major facilities such as schools,
- * churches, recreation centres and major parks.

5. Cost of Living

The ability of any community to control the cost of living is limited, but some monitoring is possible, and some influence can be exercised through publicity and through direct communication with landlords, developers and merchants. Living costs have a direct effect on community life, on some social problems, and on the public services that people demand. The community therefore has a perfect right to make its voice heard on the subject. If properly and tactfully done, this intervention can directly serve both buyers and sellers, as well as the community at large.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council create, by means of
- * a by-law, a Prices and Rents Board, with membership from:
- *
 - * Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs - secretariat to
 - * the Board
 - * Municipal Planning Commission
 - * Chamber of Commerce
 - * Consumers Association
 - * Housing and Urban Development Association (HUDAC)
 - * Grande Prairie Real Estate Board
 - * representatives of landlords
 - * representatives of tenants
 - * members of the public
 - * P.S.S.
- * The purpose of the Board would be to research pricing issues
- * and clarify them to the public, to gather and publish pricing
- * information, and to deal with complaints from both buyers and
- * sellers.

The Board would not have legal authority to impose its will on either buyers or sellers, but it would have the ability to hear both sides of a complaint, and perhaps suggest ways of satisfying it. It could perform this service on behalf either of buyers or of sellers, if requested. It would be a clarifier and mediator, rather than an advocate, although advocates of various points of view could suitably be part of it.

Some specific issues need to be looked at. The community needs a local review of landlord-tenant relations, including rents, damage deposits, security of buildings, vandalism and abuse, etc. The files of the Peace River Office of Consumer and Corporate Affairs would be a good place to start, since they contain a record of complaints received. Another issue is the treatment of long-term tenants in a rapidly rising market. Should they receive special consideration (if so, how much) or should they pay the market rate? Another issue concerns the service businesses like restaurants and hotels. Both the prices and the service have been criticized, and are thought to be damaging the community's ability to attract conventions and tourists.

Because Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs has placed its regional office in Peace River, there is no local office providing financial counselling and the other services of that Department. The Peace River office does its best, but cannot provide full service to Grande Prairie.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs
- * station a financial counsellor in Grande Prairie, to assist
- * persons who are in financial trouble, or want to stay out,
- * to provide research services to the Prices and Rents Board,
- * and to provide any administrative support the Board needs.

The most serious increases in living costs have occurred because of rapid and unsatisfied increases in demand for housing, both for rent and purchase. The rate of increase has eased considerably since last year, but there is nothing to prevent a similar jump when the next spurt of growth comes along.

Since spurts of growth cannot be predicted far enough ahead for effective action to be taken, the solution must lie in proper contingency planning. Planning should begin at least two, and preferably three years before the houses are needed. The community should be thinking, in detail, three years ahead, so that it always has plans ready, to ensure enough lots and apartment units in properly-designed neighbourhoods, no matter what contingency comes along. This activity would, of course, have to be carried out in cooperation with the land owners and developers.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That the City, through the Municipal
- * Planning Commission, institute formal contingency planning
- * so that detailed plans are available to meet the housing
- * demands of the maximum conceivable amount of population
- * growth for the next three years, and that this process be
- * continuous.

Developers are now required to sign development agreements with the City, specifying the undertakings of both sides concerning physical design and services. It would be highly advantageous, but obviously controversial, to include price, or at least pricing policy, in the matters to be negotiated between the City and the developer. Most developers now charge whatever the market will bear, and that is certainly reasonable and traditional business behaviour. But when demand comes to exceed supply by a large amount, the market will bear a price that is unduly burdensome to the buyer, unjustifiably profitable to the developer or landlord, and damaging to the community. It should be possible to restrain prices under these circumstances, through negotiation, without interfering with the developer's fair return.

6. Services to Migrants

Grande Prairie can anticipate a continuing flow of migrant workers and migrant job-seekers into the region. The point has been reached now where some facilities are functioning at or beyond capacity, and generally the management of services to these people is proceeding in a haphazard and uncoordinated way.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That a Migrant Services Coordinating Committee
- * be established under the joint leadership of the City and
- * the Canada Employment Centre, with senior representatives from
- * those agencies and:
- * R.C.M.P.
- * Wapiti Lodge
- * Croken House
- * District Office of Alberta Social Services
- * Chamber of Commerce
- * Construction Association
- * St. Joseph's Church
- * Salvation Army
- * Friendship Centre.
- * Urban Referral

The purposes of the Committee would be:

- (1) To ensure that influxes of migrants are anticipated, and appropriate plans made;
- (2) To ensure that facilities and support programs are available;
- (3) To ensure that migrants are given humane or even friendly treatment, as is appropriate considering their importance to the local economy;
- (4) To ensure that everything possible is done to protect local citizens from whatever excesses some migrants may commit;
- (5) To ensure that service agencies are regularly in touch with each other, understand each other's operating policies and problems, and are exploring ways to be mutually supportive.

Some immediate issues are outstanding:

- (1) Accommodation for male migrants — expansion of Wapiti Lodge (probable immediate need = 15 beds) or development of a new hostel;
- (2) A review of funding rates and staffing for Wapiti Lodge;
- (3) A permanent location and funding for Croken House as a facility for female migrants, a haven for battered women and a

half-way house for female offenders;

(4) A review of the need for a drop-in centre for migrants, a place where they can congregate for the day and that can function as a labour exchange;

(5) Development of back-up facilities for periods of peak demand, through church halls, camp-grounds, etc., with proper management and supervision;

(6) Development of formal liaison with drilling companies so that migrants seeking oil field work have direct access to companies without having to go to Edmonton or Calgary.

During the Study it was obvious that French-Canadian migrants had special difficulties, usually with language.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That the Canada Employment Centre employ
- * a French-Canadian Counsellor to assist migrants from Québec,
- * and that French-speaking personnel be available at all
- * times.

The attitude of some local people to French-Canadians is a bit mixed. Local leaders should set an example in discouraging a prejudicial attitude against migrants from Québec.

B. Other Regional Centres and the County

The situation faced by the smaller centres and the County is much simpler than the City's, and a much less elaborate strategy is needed.

First, it is not clear that much formal coordination of services is needed in the smaller centres. Many of their services come from the City, and they will benefit from any improvements in coordination there. Far fewer programs are offered in the smaller centres, so the opportunities for lack of coordination are far fewer. Agency personnel can far more easily come to know each other, and can more easily keep track of each other's activities, than is the case in the City, and coordination can more effectively rely on informal mechanisms.

Second, the smaller centres do not have enough of a problem with migrants to justify establishment of a program.

Third, all communities could benefit from a "Know Your Neighbour" program as proposed for the City. The method of implementing that program could be the same, through the municipal government, and using volunteer visitors. The cost is not large, and the pay-off in improved integration of newcomers and better understanding between them and the longer-term residents would be great.

Fourth, all communities would benefit from participation in the Family Life Program. We are recommending elsewhere (see Chapter V, Section 1) that P.S.S. base community workers in Beaverlodge, Sexsmith, Wembley and Hythe, to work with those communities and the surrounding County areas on programs of local priority, and to ensure that all P.S.S. programs are fully available wherever they are needed in the region. These people could organize and support Family Life Committees in any community that was interested. The function could also be undertaken by an existing group.

Fifth, although people all over the region have been exposed to price increases, and can have similar difficulties as a result, there is probably not much that can be done at the local level, and little point in setting up anything as elaborate as a Prices and Rents Board, as proposed for the City. Price changes in the small centres will reflect price changes in the City, and the best hope for controlling them lies in an effective City program.

Sixth, concerning physical planning: the contingency planning proposed for the City could easily be done on a regional basis, or for any individual smaller centre, by the Peace River Regional Planning Commission, and need not involve the creation of any new organizations or functions in the smaller centres. The task of coordinating the planning can be carried by the town and village councils. Some of the smaller centres are involved in their own land development, which gives them far more control over the whole planning process and the design of neighbourhoods.

Many of the recommendations made for specific sectors of the system of social services in the next Chapter are applicable to the smaller centres.

CHAPTER V

THE SOCIAL SERVICES SYSTEM: SECTORAL DESCRIPTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The social services system has been divided into 15 sectors, in two groups:

(1) Major Services

1. Preventive Social Services
2. Law Enforcement and Crime Prevention
3. Public Transportation
4. Health Care
5. Leisure Services
6. Education
7. Emergency Services
8. Housing
9. Spiritual Care

(2) Services to Specific Client Groups

1. Abusers of Drugs and Alcohol
2. Elders
3. Mentally and Physically Handicapped Persons
4. Single Parents
5. Preschool Children
6. Youth

Not all groups in the population are included in the list of client groups. Groups such as children of elementary school age and most adults have not been the focus of specific programs, but are dealt with through the major services.

We have made three kinds of recommendations. First, we are suggesting ways to improve the services of particular agencies, through program innovations or through better coordination within the sector. Second, we are recommending ways to bring activities within each sector into line with the strategic recommendations of Chapter IV. Third, we have tried to ensure that each sector has some permanent process that will continue to generate improvements to services as the area changes and grows. Some sectors have those processes now, and some do not. In the latter cases, we have recommended ways to establish them.

Because of the importance that we have attached to these processes, some very important sectors have few recommendations. For example, both health care and education are, by any standard, among the largest and most important parts of the social services system. Because of their intrinsic importance, and because of Grande Prairie's importance as a regional centre, these services are in a

highly-developed state, with competent professionals engaged in planning and program evaluation as a steady part of their work. We have concluded therefore that the processes for generating improvements to services are in good shape for those sectors, and have left the prosecution of particular improvements to those processes, without much advice from us.

To do this is not to imply that improvements to these services are unimportant, or should have lesser priority than those where we have made more recommendations. Neither health care nor education emerged as "burning" issues during our interviews, but clearly continued improvement is vital to the long-term progress of the area. But we have judged that the services are probably as good as the present population can support (with the exception of the old hospital) and that normal planning and expansion will ensure that further improvements will continue to be made. It would be redundant for us to make recommendations for things that are already being done, or which we are confident will be done as soon as the population is large enough.

The amount of detail in our recommendations also reflects the amount of time we were able to spend on each sector, and that allocation reflected our terms of reference, and the things that came out of our interviews as we went along. We were required to carry out an evaluation of Preventive Social Services; our recommendations for that program are therefore quite specific. We were required to answer certain specific questions concerning the ability of the system to provide services in time to meet enlarged need. But most programs in the system were not subjected to detailed evaluation, of a kind that would have produced more specific recommendations, simply because time was insufficient, and we gave priority to strategic requirements for programming to accommodate rapid growth.

A. Major Services

1. Preventive Social Services

P.S.S. is a regional program, covering at present the entire Study area, with the exception of the Town of Wembley. During this Study the Program was evaluated in detail, to determine whether, and in what sense, it was providing a preventive service, and to see whether its present projects were suited to the needs of the area. At the same time, P.S.S. was carrying out an internal evaluation into the operations of each project.

Our evaluation concluded that a well-rounded preventive social services program would emphasize true prevention, early interception and personal development, with some helping services for high-risk groups in the population. (For definitions of these terms, see Appendix B.) It would work in cooperation with the treatment and recreation services available in the community, and in fact with all services, so that people who come to the attention of the preventive programs, through early interception or work with high-risk groups, can be sent to the proper people for treatment or other rehabilitative service.

The present program of Grande Prairie and District Preventive Social Services consists of:

(1) Community Services

(a) Playschools

- programs for 4-year-old children in Clairmont, Beaverlodge, Hythe, Valhalla, La Glace, Sexsmith and Valhalla Centre;

(b) Indoor Playground

- for pre-school children in the City;

(c) Mother's Day Out

- for mothers in the City;

(d) Rural Community Groups

- craft-oriented social and recreational groups in Bezanson, Teepee Creek, and Sexsmith.

(2) Day Care

P.S.S. was the agency primarily responsible for Day Care, but now, because of changes in Provincial policy, has only residual involvement with the day care centres. P.S.S. is still responsible for licensing of day care homes (for children under two, primarily) and will probably assume responsibility for after school care.

(3) Homemaker Services

P.S.S. operates the homemaker part of the Health Unit's Coordinated Home Care program, and provides emergency homemaker service on its own.

(4) Family Aides

The homemaker program has had an educational side, which provided family aides to people who needed help with basic "life skills". Until recently one of these worked especially with native people.

(5) Senior Citizens Coordinator

This person provides coordination for activities at the Golden Age Centre; costs are shared with the Senior Citizens' Council, which governs the Centre.

(6) School-Community Liaison Project

This program works with children and youths who have been identified by the schools as needing special attention, and provides counselling to the children and their families. Costs are shared with the Public and Separate School Boards.

(7) Volunteer Services Bureau

This program, which has its own Board (the Volunteer Services Board), is designed to help find volunteers to serve other programs, and to help those programs organize to make best use of volunteers.

(8) Director and Administration

The director is expected to be responsible for staff development and management of all projects, to carry out community development, and to engage in social planning.

We found that only two projects — Day Home Care licensing and the School-Community Liaison Project — are strongly preventive in their present form, the first because it is a helping service of special value to single parents, a high-risk group, and the second because it qualifies as an early interception service. Several of the other projects have some preventive value, or were originally intended to be more preventive than they are now.

Funding for P.S.S. is provided by the member municipalities, by the Province of Alberta, and by users. The Province pays 80% of costs not paid by users, and the municipalities 20%. The Program is governed by the Preventive Social Services Board, with two representatives from the City, and one each from Beaverlodge, Hythe, Sexsmith, and the County of Grande Prairie, all appointed by and members of the municipal councils.

The following recommendations emerged from the P.S.S. evaluation:

- * RECOMMENDATION: That P.S.S. combine its homemaker service,
- * senior citizens' coordinator, family aide program and
- * volunteer services bureau coordinator into a Special Groups
- * Program, and that the Volunteer Services Board function as
- * a planning committee for that Program.

The special groups on which the Program should focus are elderly people, especially those living at home; mentally and physically handicapped people; single parents; and newcomers to the community. The purpose of the Program would be to maintain an inventory of these people and to keep track of how they are doing, to advocate at all levels in the community on behalf of these groups, and to organize services where necessary. One priority would be to establish a network of neighbourhood services, through volunteers, to provide them with day-to-day assistance with small tasks such as snow-shovelling, minor maintenance, emergency baby sitting, etc.

Obviously this program ties in with the "Know Your Neighbour" program recommended as part of the main strategy (see Chapter IV).

- * RECOMMENDATION: See Page 45 (Family Life Program)
- * RECOMMENDATION: That P.S.S. bring together its activity
- * with pre-school children and its School-Community Liaison
- * Program into a Child Development and Youth Services Program;
- * that it create a Child Development and Youth Services
- * Planning Committee to guide the Program; that P.S.S. seek,
- * in cooperation with other interested agencies, a unified
- * approach to pre-school programming in the region, perhaps
- * along the lines proposed in the Provincial Early Childhood
- * Services program; and that the activities of the School-
- * Community Liaison Program be extended full-scale into the
- * elementary schools and even, if possible, into the day care
- * system.

This recommendation will be discussed in greater detail in Part B of this Chapter, Sections 5 and 6.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That P.S.S. create a Community Liaison
- * Program, and place community workers in Sexsmith, Wembley,
- * Beaverlodge and Hythe to assist local organizations to
- * develop local programs in these centres and the rural areas
- * around them and to help with program delivery. Part of
- * this Recommendation includes the entry of Wembley into the
- * P.S.S. Program.

The purpose of this recommendation is two-fold: first, to ensure that all P.S.S. programs and services are available as equally as possible throughout the region and second, to make available to the smaller centres personnel who can assist in the development of locally-based programs, according to need. It is probable that much of the work of these people would be with pre-school children and their mothers, youths and old folks.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That P.S.S. add a research staff of one
- * person to its operations, to develop information systems
- * necessary to support all P.S.S. programs, and to assist
- * generally with social analysis and planning.

A preventive program must be built on good information, since true prevention requires continuous social analysis, in order to understand the causes of problems, and early interception requires sensitive "antennae", in order to spot early the symptoms of problems. The regional society is quite large enough and quite complex enough to keep a researcher more than busy.

We believe that P.S.S. has an important role to play in the social services system, a role that it has not really undertaken in the past. For one reason, common sense and experience show that prevention is the least expensive and most humane way to deal with social problems. For another, P.S.S. is one of the few agencies in the Grande Prairie system that does not have a specialized perspective, and thus it can serve to draw agencies together and provide opportunities for coordinated discussion and action.

The final recommendation for P.S.S. is intended further to broaden its base in the community, and to take some of the pressure off the elected representatives on the Board:

- * RECOMMENDATION: That the P.S.S. Board be doubled in size
- * by including six members appointed by, but not members of
- * the municipal councils; the City would appoint two
- * additional members, and the other municipalities one each.

2. Law Enforcement and Crime Prevention

The law enforcement and crime prevention system in Grande Prairie has three components: police forces, the courts and their attached agencies, and various social services for working with offenders. The region has no jail, the nearest being Peace River.

(1) Police Forces

The largest and most important police force is the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, with detachments in Grande Prairie and Beaverlodge. The Grande Prairie detachment, with a strength of 42 officers, covers an area from Debolt to Wembley; Beaverlodge, with 3, serves from west of Wembley to the British Columbia border.

The composition of the City detachment is:

City	- General Patrol	17
	- Traffic	2
	- Plainclothes	3
	- Administration	2
	- Court Officer	1
	- Public Relations	<u>1</u>
		26
Rural	- General Patrol	7
	Highway Patrol	4
	Identification	3
	Drugs (paid by the Federal Gov't)	<u>2</u>
Total Officers		42
Special Constables		3

Because of the very large increases in criminal cases and traffic accidents (see Table 17 page 28) the Grande Prairie detachment has found itself seriously under-manned. Senior officers contend that this has not reduced the effectiveness of their investigations of criminal cases, and that the reduction in the percentage of cases cleared (from 38% to 35% in the first six months of 1980, compared with the same period in 1979) is only the natural result of increasing size and mobility of the population. But they do admit it has cut into their preventive work and into their precautionary patrols, especially in the rural area.

The root of the problem seems to be a shortage of officers throughout the R.C.M.P. The competition among communities for each year's increase is very sharp. It is easy, and obvious, to recommend increases in City R.C.M.P. strength, but the mechanism for getting them is not as obvious: the Provincial and Federal Governments will agree on a total increase for the Province; senior officers from the various detachments will argue among themselves about who deserves to get them, and an allocation will be made. The Inspector in charge of the Grande Prairie detachment will be there doing his best, and about all the community can do is back him up.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That the strength of the Grande Prairie
- * detachment increase by at least one officer per shift, and
- * preferably two, with the objective of restoring full service
- * to the rural areas and increasing preventive and precautionary
- * patrols in the City; and that community leaders and the
- * Police Commission take all action possible to support local
- * R.C.M.P. administration in their efforts to increase staff.

Manpower problems in the Beaverlodge detachment are reported to be not nearly as acute, although rig accidents at distant sites can take away available personnel for significant periods of time, and create short-term shortages. The criminal situation in Beaverlodge, Hythe and the other centres is said to be fairly calm.

Three other agencies undertake police work of one kind and another in the region: the County Police ("County Mounties") patrolling County roads; the Alberta Highway Patrol enforcing trucking regulations; and the City By-Law Enforcement Officers. Under most circumstances, this amount of compartmentalization in the system would create no difficulties, but in Grande Prairie, for the time being, it has led to some odd allocations of manpower (see page 34).

Although Grande Prairie has a police commission with both aldermen and citizens at large, its role in the system appears unclearly defined. At the very least, it should function actively as a forum for joint discussion of policing problems between representatives of the citizenry and the R.C.M.P., and as an advisor to City Council and the R.C.M.P. on matters of policy.

The question of replacing the R.C.M.P. in Grande Prairie with a City Police force has been discussed from time to time. This would only become a necessary step if the R.C.M.P. could not supply enough manpower to police the community adequately, and this point has not yet been reached. The R.C.M.P., like many bureaucracies, have difficulty reacting to sudden increases in activity; their budgets are made up two years in advance. If the rate of growth in Grande Prairie declines, the R.C.M.P. will catch up. If it does not, then they will probably continue to run behind. No doubt the day will come when Grande Prairie forms its own police force, but there seems no need to move hastily now.

(2) The Courts

Grande Prairie has both a Provincial Court and a Court of Queen's Bench, with accompanying judges, prosecutors, and a Legal Aid Office.

During the past two years the courts have been significantly crowded with cases, a situation for which a number of reasons have been stated. First, of course, is an increase in the number of cases (see statistics for criminal cases and traffic charges in Table 17 page 28). Second, the courts have been plagued by people who do not show up for trial, thus invoking a complicated and expensive machinery for chasing after them. Often this must be done for relatively minor traffic offences. Third, some lawyers have been uncooperative. A lawyer is of course entitled to take whatever action is necessary to serve his client, but there have been some incidents of negligence, as for example, when lawyers who have been hired to appear on someone's behalf do not show up in court, or when they change a client's plea to "guilty" after court time and all facilities have been reserved for a trial. (One such case came about because the lawyer had not interviewed his client until the last possible minute.) These problems have been aggravated by shortages of administrative staff, partly due to low wages.

The courts have procedures in place for resolving these problems. A new resident judge has been assigned, and will bring

an increased allocation of administrative staff. Problems with the lawyers are being taken up with the local Bar Association. A review is under way of the methods for dealing with minor traffic offences.

Much would be improved administratively by formal coordination in the courts between the judges, the police, court officials, prosecutors, and defence lawyers. But the Kirby Commission, which designed the present court system, specifically recommended against such measures, out of concern that they would jeopardize the legal rights of defendants. The Kirby Commission even recommended that these different offices be located in different buildings.

Naturally communication is necessary among these various offices in order to keep the system running, and this takes place now between the Clerk of Queen's Bench, the Clerk of the Provincial Court, and the Chief Stenographer, Queen's Counsel, Department of the Attorney General. These people are vitally important to the smooth operation of the courts. Their informal, regular communication seems to provide coordination at an adequate level, without creating the problems that concerned the Kirby Commission.

On the one hand, we have bottle-necks in the courts and various legal gremlins that aggravate them. On the other, we have established machinery for eliminating gremlins and for keeping the courts functioning smoothly. It appears to us that the recent difficulties in the courts are probably of a short-term nature. There seems therefore to be no point in recommending new procedures.

(3) Social Service Agencies

A number of other social service agencies work with the legal system. The Community Corrections Branch, Alberta Solicitor General's Department, provides services to both the courts and people appearing in court on criminal charges, and offers family and domestic counselling. Native Counselling Services assists native people who find themselves in trouble with the law, and need help understanding their rights, interests, privileges and responsibilities in relation to the justice system. The Youth Program (see Section B-6 for details) works with delinquents and borderline delinquents. The John Howard Society supervises community service orders for adults of both sexes, and has been working with the Youth Program to develop new approaches for penalizing young offenders, through compensation by service and direct negotiation with the victim. Alberta Social Services and Community Health takes responsibility for the treatment of juvenile delinquents.

The Cool Aid Program, established by the efforts of the R.C.M.P., provides assistance and counselling of all kinds to young people, many of them migrants, and referral to appropriate agencies.

There are some local institutions. The Youth Assessment Centre is a place of incarceration for young offenders, with a maximum limit of 90 days. Wapiti Lodge serves people on probation,

is a Community Residential Corrections facility, and a half-way house.

One issue that was presented to us concerned half-way houses. At present, there is no half-way house for women in Grande Prairie, and Wapiti Lodge is used to capacity. Consideration of expansion for Wapiti Lodge or construction of a new hostel for men, and of permanent funding for Croken House (see page 50: Services to Migrants) should include the need for half-way houses for offenders of both sexes. Since it appears that the number of such spaces needed is fairly small, the half-way house function should be combined with other migrant-service facilities, as at Wapiti Lodge now.

3. Public Transportation

The City of Grande Prairie has already decided to set up a system of public transportation, and has ordered buses. If present plans work out, the system will be in operation by next Spring.

Provided that routes and schedules are properly set, we believe the system will be well used. Many people in our interviews commented on the problems created by lack of public transportation, especially in Winter, and especially for those who do not or prefer not to drive.

There is still much to be done in planning routes and schedules. Present plans seem to call for an experimental period, during which different ideas would be tried, and incorporated in the permanent system if they work out. This may well be a realistic approach, but we would suggest that a more formal social planning process would also be beneficial.

In some sections of Part B in this Chapter we have recommended that the public transportation system try to serve the specific needs of certain groups in Grande Prairie: the elders, handicapped people, single parents, and youths. To do this would complement the primary purposes of the system, which of course would be to move people to and from work and shopping. We are recommending coordinating groups that could undertake reviews of the routes and schedules needed by their particular clients. These would then need to be brought together and discussed with the City's transportation planners, to arrive at the best possible system.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That the City invite senior people from
- * social service agencies and coordinating committees,
- * especially the Elders' Committee, the P.S.S. Special Groups
- * Committee, the Child Development and Youth Services Committee,
- * and the Recreation Board, to sit with its transportation
- * planners and other interested parties as a Task Force on
- * Routes and Schedules for the new public transportation system.
- * Each interest group should develop its own recommendation
- * for the Task Force, based on the needs of its clients, and
- * the Task Force should be responsible for drawing them to-
- * gether into an initial operating plan.

Clearly, the experimental phase will still be essential, even with a task force to organize initial plans. Experiments that are started on social grounds should not be terminated too quickly, however, if demand does not immediately materialize. People need time to adjust their habits and accustom themselves to a new service. Adequate promotional work should be done with each specific client group, so that they are aware of the service and what it is trying to do.

4. Health Care

Grande Prairie has a highly developed health care system. Thirty-three physicians practise in the City, including 12 specialists: 2 surgeons, an orthopedic surgeon, 2 anaesthetists, 2 ophthalmologists, an internist, a pediatrician, the hospital pathologist, and 2 psychiatrists. Other physicians in the region: Sexsmith - 1; Beaverlodge - 3; Hythe - 2.

Grande Prairie, Beaverlodge and Hythe all have hospitals. Grande Prairie's is old and obsolete, but is now being replaced with a new and expanded facility. The process of locating and planning that hospital, and the consequent delays, have caused considerable controversy and some bitterness, but the responsibility is not easy to fix (everybody blames somebody else), and the problems do not seem related to rapid growth. Hythe also will have a new hospital.

Individuals, families or groups requiring assessment, health education, supervision, counselling or treatment related to prevention of illness or limitation of disability obtain service from the Grande Prairie Health Unit. Its services include: community health nursing, a dental program, speech pathology, environmental health (public health inspectors), nutrition, coordinated home care, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, and sponsoring of the South Peace Planned Parenthood program (see Section B-6). Among groups of special concern to the Health Unit are babies (pre-natal courses and well baby clinics), unmarried mothers, handicapped people and the elderly.

The City also has 13 dentists and 4 chiropractors. The nearest orthodontist is in Dawson Creek. There is a chiropractic clinic in Beaverlodge.

As with all health care system in smaller centres, the demands for improvement are many, and usually centre on the need for more specialists. These needs are felt especially acutely by the health care professionals in the system. The Health Unit has identified an audiologist as the most important current need, and has requested funds to hire one.

The recent Warner Report on health needs in northern Alberta*

* Warner, Morton M., Health Care Associates Ltd. Health Needs in Northern Alberta. For the Northern Alberta Development Council, April 1980.

gave some comparative statistics on services in the Grande Prairie Health District. The number of acute hospital beds per capita was substantially below the rest of northern Alberta, a problem that should be rectified by the new hospital. The ratio of general practitioners to population was better than the Provincial average, and much better than the northern Alberta average. (Warner Report, page 105.) The ratio for specialists was better than northern Alberta's but of course below the Province's (Page 105). The ratio for optometrists was better than both northern Alberta's and Alberta's; for ophthalmic dispensers it was better than northern Alberta's but worse than Alberta's. For chiropractors it was better both ways. (Warner, pages 106-108.) Grande Prairie's dentist-to-population ratio was generally in line with other small cities in Alberta (page 144).

Warner reported (page 112) no vacancies and no turnover among dental personnel in the Grande Prairie district; no vacancies and high turnover for dietary personnel; moderate vacancies and turnover for medical technologists and x-ray technicians; moderate vacancies and high turnover for registered nurses; low vacancies and high turnover for nursing assistants and other nurses; high vacancies and turnover for physiotherapists and speech therapists; high vacancies for health records personnel and community health representatives; and generally low vacancies and turnover for other social services personnel.

The health care system has well-established methods for expanding and diversifying its services, through the Health Unit Board and the hospital boards (Grande Prairie's and Beaverlodge-Hythe's), using their established procedures with the Provincial Government, and through the private enterprise of medical clinics and doctors. As far as expansions in personnel are concerned, we found no evidence that these methods are working poorly, and no strong concern from our interviews with the public. In our opinion perhaps the only unusual gap is the lack of a specialist in obstetrics and gynecology. As the market for medical services expands with population growth more physicians, and more of them specialists, are moving into the area. It is not clear that the methods worked well or fast enough with the new hospital, but that is obviously a large and complex issue, which we were not able to research in sufficient detail. We heard many opinions on all sides of the issue, but no sound suggestions for improving the processes.

We have no recommendations on the subject of health care personnel, although clearly anything which interfered with or retarded the natural expansion and improvement of the system would be detrimental to the progress of the region. We believe the health care system is well enough organized to draw in more specialists as population numbers increase; any recommendations from us would be superfluous.

The hospital is anticipating continuing problems with recruitment of staff, particularly nurses. Part of the problem is the cost of living, especially rents, part is the increasingly

migratory nature of the population, and part may be shortages in day-care facilities, since many nurses are single parents or have children still at home. (See Warner, p. 183.) These are community-wide problems dealt with elsewhere in this Report. (See Chapter IV and section B-5 of this Chapter.)

Grande Prairie has a large Mental Health Services office, with two psychiatrists. The Peace Counselling Service, assisted by the United Way, also provides marriage, family and personal counselling.

Table 15, page 26, shows the Mental Health Services operating statistics, and we noted that these should not be interpreted too simply. They are somewhat perplexing, however. Although we have no evidence that would have predicted a large surge in mental health cases, we cannot satisfactorily explain the sharp drop in registrations, terminations and contacts in the Mental Health Services office. We would have expected to find a more-or-less constant per capita need. Perhaps the statistics simply reflect changes in methods of record-keeping. Perhaps they reflect changes in operating methods by which more effective service is being given in each contact. Perhaps the office is being more selective in its acceptance of clients. Perhaps staff turnover has cut down on the number of counsellors available. Perhaps there are more serious problems. We do not have the answer and could not carry out a full program evaluation. Our own data shed little light on people's opinions of the service; we heard a few criticisms, but none of major weight. We can only suggest that Mental Health Services seek a formal evaluation of their program.

5. Leisure Services

Fortunately for the length of this Report, the system of leisure services in Grande Prairie, including Parks and Recreation, Culture and Further Education, is far too large to describe in detail. And to do that would duplicate the work of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan that is now being prepared. Suffice to say that our inventory, in the City, counted 33 cultural groups and 57 sporting groups, counting all the organizations within each sport as one group. The smaller centres also are well organized, but obviously on a smaller scale. People from all over the region take part in activities in the City.

Recommendations for more and better recreation facilities came to us all during the Study, even though the City has very fine facilities now. Many of these were for the benefit of particular groups (youth, elders, migrants, preschool children) and will be described in the appropriate sections below.

The system seems to be expanding steadily, both in facilities and in programs, and there is no need to be concerned about the process. Recreation facilities are politically popular at both the Provincial and municipal levels, and the public seems to enjoy taking part in activities. All communities, we believe, can look forward to further improvement.

Our work on family life and neighbourhood life produced two recommendations, through which the recreation system can support the major community initiatives that we are recommending:

- * RECOMMENDATION: That the leisure services system, including
 - * Parks and Recreation, Culture, Library, SCORES (Further
 - * Education), etc., attach major importance to encouragement
 - * of whole-family activities, that some "prime time" at major
 - * community facilities be set aside for family use, and that
 - * appropriate activities be organized, for those families who
 - * would like organized activities.
-
- * RECOMMENDATION: That small leisure centres suitable for
 - * indoor play, exercise, meetings, and generally a full
 - * range of neighbourhood activities be planned into new areas
 - * wherever possible.

We believe that the leisure services system should be fully involved in both the Family Life Program and the "Know Your Neighbours" Program, which are major components in the general community strategy. Leisure time is an important time for building family and neighbourhood ties. We are recommending that the services for leisure time work to support that.

It is possible that, in the early stages, time in major facilities set aside for family participation will not be well used. Other groups, the hockey leagues, figure skaters, swimming groups, etc., will by eyeing that time enviously, and will be quick to demand it back if usage is not heavy. We urge patience. People are not now in the habit of using these facilities in prime time, mostly because the facilities have not been available. We believe they will come to make excellent use of them, as they have in other places, once the schedules become known.

6. Education

(1) Elementary and Secondary School Education

Elementary and secondary school education is offered mainly through four elected school boards and the County Council. The four elected boards are: Grande Prairie School District # 2357, Grande Prairie Roman Catholic Separate School District # 28, Beaverlodge Roman Catholic Separate School District # 68, and Sexsmith Roman Catholic Separate School District # 51. These operate a number of schools and a wide range of special programs.

In the City, elementary programs are offered at 5 schools by the Public School Board, and at 4 schools by the Separate School Board; junior high (grades 7-9) programs are offered at 2 schools by each and senior high at 1 school by each. The County operates 14 schools, 11 of which have elementary programs, 8 have junior high, and two have high school. The County's high school students near the City attend the Composite High School with the City Public School

Board's students. Total enrolment is: City - about 4,750 students; County - about 3,240.

The Separate School in Sexsmith offers grades 1 to 9 for about 90 students, and the one in Beaverlodge the same grades to an undisclosed number.

A private Christian school at Bethel Baptist Church in the City offers grades 1 to 9 (expanding to grade 10 next year) for 32 students.

Special education services for educable children are:

Youth Assessment Centre (Public School Board) -
a regular school program for inmates, with
20 students and 2 teachers;

"Soar" Program at Swanavon (Public) for 45 to 50
gifted students in grades 4 to 6, for 2 half-
days per week;

English as a Second Language for students whose first
language is French at Holy Cross (R.C.) school;

Learning Assistance Centre, Alberta Department of
Education, provides speech therapists who work
with children and teachers; supplemented by
the Health Unit's speech therapist;

"Quest" at the Kincentre (Public), an alternative
school for students with discipline problems:
1 teacher; 1 aide;

Academic Occupational Program at the Composite High
School provides vocational classes for about
30 students;

Resource Room programs provide special classes and
teachers for students with learning disabilities,
with 1 resource room in each City elementary
school;

French Immersion Program in St. Gerard's (R.C.)
Elementary School offering French Early
Childhood Services and grade 1 classes, advancing
1 grade each year - currently 84 students;

Opportunity rooms for the educable mentally handicapped
at Swanavon, Hillside, Avondale and Montrose
(Public) schools, for 54 students;

Classes for gifted children in 3 R.C. elementary schools;

Alberta Education, through the Learning Assistance Centre and the Educational Opportunities Fund supports special education with diagnostic services and special funding.

Special education services for trainable children are:

Montrose Special Education Program (formerly known as the Peace School of Hope) for mentally handicapped students aged 5 to 18 is provided by the Public School Board but serves children from throughout the Grande Prairie region;

Child Development Centre for children with multiple handicaps (27 students) also provided by the Public School Board — special teachers and therapists, including a physiotherapist provided by the Health Unit;

Early Intervention Program operated out of the Child Development Centre providing in-home service to children with multiple handicaps, aged 0 to 3½, and their parents.

Special education services in County schools include opportunity rooms in Sexsmith (both schools) and Beaverlodge elementary, and resource rooms at 7 schools. Sexsmith Secondary has a special program for the disillusioned or unmotivated students in grades 7 to 9, with a capacity of 8 students.

(2) Adult Education

The most important adult education facility is Grande Prairie Regional College, offering academic development (up-grading to grade 12), business administration, Early Childhood Services certificate, industrial training, secretarial science, university transfer programs, and training in the visual and performing arts.

The Peace River Bible Institute in Sexsmith, with 120 students, prepares people for pastoral and mission work, provides training in Christian education and church music.

Non-credit programs are offered by the Standing Committee on Recreational and Education Services (Grande Prairie Further Education Council), whose participants are the Parks and Recreation Department, the Public and Roman Catholic School Boards, the Regional College and other agencies. Similar service is provided in the County by the County Further Education Council.

(3) Discussion and Recommendations

The most important feature of this system, from the point of view of this Study, is the fact that it is a very well-established

system, and that processes for expanding, improving, and generally adjusting to new situations function well. The system has generated some controversies recently, especially around the two junior high schools in the City Public system. Montrose Junior High School, an old school located in the downtown area, has a bit of a poor reputation, for which we have been able to find little justification. It seems to be based on parents' desire to keep their children from hanging around in the downtown area, and a "pressure cooker" effect from nearly 500 young adolescents being isolated in their own school, away from the moderating influence of either younger or older children. Many parents on the south side of the City were counting on sending their children to Alexander Forbes School, the new, combined elementary and junior high school. But the southward migration proceeded faster than expected, and the new school was filled with students from the areas furthest south. This sent a number of students from the near south side back to Montrose, to the annoyance of their parents. These are normal growing problems, and do not reflect on the quality of the planning.

We have no recommendations for the elementary and secondary school systems. We expect that demands for improved service will continue, and that the processes are capable of providing it, as the population grows.

We should underline the importance of S.C.O.R.E.S. in the Family Life Program and in the neighbourhood programs, for two reasons. First, further education is an important part of the system of leisure services, and should play its part in that system's contribution to these programs. This can come about in two ways: through courses designed for whole-family or neighbourhood participation, as the case may be, and through courses designed to assist people with their parenting ("How to Parent" courses). The latter could be offered in concert with the Ministerial Association, which has been offering pre-marriage courses (see Section A-9 below).

Second, S.C.O.R.E.S. is governed by an inter-agency board on which are represented all the major educational agencies in the City. Discussion of the Family Life and neighbourhood programs at S.C.O.R.E.S. would therefore have a multi-agency effect.

One specific issue that was mentioned in connection with adult education was the absence of apprenticeship training programs in the City. Responsibility for these has been assigned to Fairview College, and few courses have been offered in Grande Prairie. This perhaps could be taken up by the Chamber of Commerce and/or the Construction Association with Fairview College and the Provincial Government.

7. Emergency Services

The Grande Prairie Ambulance Service, serving Grande Prairie, Sexsmith and Wembley, and the surrounding County area, maintains 3 vehicles and 10 full-time staff, including 1 paramedic. It has one of only 7 advanced life-support services in Alberta. The Town of Beaverlodge also maintains an ambulance. The City service and Beaverlodge's cooperate during busy times.

Rig accidents are a special source of concern to ambulance staff, since they frequently occur at some distance in the hinterland and tie up staff and equipment for long periods of time.

Grande Prairie, Beaverlodge, Wembley, Sexsmith and Hythe all have their own fire departments; the County contracts with them for service to the surrounding area. The Grande Prairie Department has 42 full-time and 20 part-time members, with 11 vehicles.

The District Office of Alberta Disaster Services is in Grande Prairie, and serves the entire Peace River region. Their purpose is to help municipalities prepare for possible disasters, to lend help in an emergency, to train personnel, to analyze the hazards in each municipality, and to provide information to people on disaster procedures.

The potential sources of disaster identified for Grande Prairie are dangerous goods in transit and flooding. Grande Prairie's by-pass for dangerous goods from Clairmont Road to Wapiti Road is one of the few such by-passes in Alberta, but still brings them close to developed areas. The routing of dangerous goods by rail is being discussed at the Federal level.

Improvements to safety at the Grande Prairie airport are under way, with construction of an air crash annex.

No serious issues were raised concerning emergency services. Processes for improvement are in place and seem to be working. As services expand, consideration could be given to placing equipment (ambulances) in Sexsmith and Wembley.

8. Housing

During 1978 and 1979 an acute shortage developed in the housing market throughout the region, causing prices to rise sharply. The development and building industries responded as quickly as they could until, by the middle of 1980, a substantial surplus of both houses and serviced lots was on the market. Anticipated sales did not develop, possibly in part due to price increases, in part due to rises in interest rates, and in part due to some moderation in the pace of economic expansion.

We tried to obtain statistics on housing starts in 1979 and 1980, but were unsuccessful. The data in Table 9, page 21 are based on building permits, and thus only approximate actual starts.

It appears that the development industry in the Grande Prairie area is well organized, adequately financed, and definitely capable of producing houses at reasonably short notice, as they did in 1979. Concerns have been expressed about the quality of the houses, and about the adequacy of physical planning, however.

In Chapter IV, Section 5 (page 48) we discussed contingency planning as one part of the solution to future jumps in the cost of housing. That recommendation fits here as well. Both this study and the Grande Prairie Area Growth Study have predicted population numbers up to 1985. We are recommending immediate steps to plan, in detail, for the number of dwellings — both rental and purchase — that will be needed to house those people, and to ensure that these are placed in properly planned neighbourhoods, for which all the needs of the people who will live there have been thought out in advance.

Without that kind of formal planning process, the City, or any other community, has no guarantee that housing shortages can be averted in the future. For the time being there are enough houses and lots. That situation could persist for a year or two, but unless the local economy collapses completely, a lot more houses are going to be needed before 1985, and the planning and scheduling for them, on the basis of plausible contingencies, should start right away.

Two other housing issues have been raised during this Study. The first concerns the older neighbourhoods of the City, such as the VLA tract, Hillside, Avondale and the Bear Creek area. These are under increasing commercial pressure, and are in danger of being destroyed, something which would impoverish the entire community. Preservation will require creation of alternative commercial areas, a tough stand on zoning changes, to prevent excessive incursions of apartment buildings (construction of modest numbers of low-rise apartments, adequately spaced, would pose little threat, but concentrations of high-density units should be avoided), and careful planning of transportation corridors.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That physical planning, and contingency
- * planning for new housing, include preservation of the older
- * residential areas of the City, in order to preserve an internal
- * balance and good mixture of various land uses throughout the
- * City.

The second issue concerns Civic Housing. The City now has 15 duplexes, built about 10 years ago, and occupied mainly by single parents. Good civic housing serves low-income people well, and should continue to be part of the housing mix, either through periodic major developments, or through steady acquisition of individual units dotted throughout the community. We have no formula for the

"right" number in a community of given size, but if 30 units could be justified 10 years ago, probably at least another 30 could be justified now.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That the City undertake a feasibility study
- * of additional civic housing units, either through construction
- * of a new development similar in concept to the present one,
- * or through acquisition of a similar number of units at different locations in the City.

9. Spiritual Care

All communities seem to have an adequate number and variety of churches, some receiving very hearty support from their congregations. Most of these churches minister to their congregations in the usual way, holding services, teaching Sunday school, visiting the sick, baptizing, marrying, burying and counselling. It is useful and valuable service.

A few are into social service programs. Teen Challenge, a program for young people with a drop-in centre, hostel and counselling service, is run by the Evangel Assembly. The Salvation Army operates Wapiti Lodge, and has a church program working with alcoholics, migrants and others in need.

Grande Prairie has an active Ministerial Association, to which most churches belong. The Association operates a marriage preparation course, as a pre-requisite for all who wish to be married in church. The hospital chaplaincy service, in which various clergy participate on a rotational basis, is coordinated through the Association as well.

Key elements in the strategy we are recommending are the Family Life and neighbourhood programs. We believe that the churches have important parts to play in both these. First, the churches have long considered themselves as strong supporters of family life. There is a tendency in some congregations for activities, as in the recreation system, to be segregated by age and sex (Sunday schools separated from the adult congregation and divided by age; women's groups; men's groups; youth groups; etc.). Some of this segregation is useful, but every congregation should have some regular activity — a weekly service, a monthly pot-luck supper, or whatever — in which families can participate as whole units. Second, every church has two forms of neighbourhood identity: the buildings are placed in a physical neighbourhood, and the congregation itself is a "functional" neighbourhood, in that it is made up of a number of households with a common interest.

The churches should participate in the neighbourhood programs in both these ways, by participating in the "Know Your Neighbour" program in their physical neighbourhood, and by carrying that program fully into their congregational neighbourhood. For

a Christian congregation, of course, knowing the neighbour is only the start. That neighbour must be cared about and cared for as well.

B. Services to Specific Client Groups

1. Abusers of Drugs and Alcohol

The most important agency in services to those who suffer from abuse of drugs and alcohol is the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission, which is represented in Grande Prairie at two levels: a local office, to serve the Grande Prairie area, and a regional office, supervising activity throughout northern Alberta. The Commission (A.A.D.A.C.) provides a wide range of services, including treatment of addicts; counselling of addicts and their families; nurturing of support groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous for the addicts themselves, Alanon and Alateen for their spouses and children; education and literature on alcohol and drug effects and problems; an impaired driver program which must be taken by people whose licenses have been suspended for impaired driving; and the development of local organizations to operate programs and facilities under AADAC's funded agencies program.

Other local agencies involved in work with addicts and associated problems are the local medical system; Alberta Mental Health Services and Peace Counselling; churches, especially the Salvation Army; Wapiti Lodge, which offers detox facilities and extended accommodation/counselling; and the Cool Aid program, which picks up young addicts and tries to refer them to AADAC for care. For the criminal aspects of drug use, the R.C.M.P.'s Ottawa-based drug policing operation funds two constables at the Grande Prairie detachment.

Traffic is reported to consist mainly of marijuana and related drugs, with some cocaine. Use of heroin is rare. Some pushers are quite well known in the community, and have good access to young people, as runners and as customers.

One immediate unresolved issue is a detox centre for Grande Prairie. At present, the hospital and Wapiti Lodge are both used for this purpose, but neither is really appropriate, since hospital care is expensive and more intensive than most detox patients need, and Wapiti Lodge was not built and is not staffed for this purpose.

The other unresolved issue is permanent, and that is, the inevitable problems in locating people who need help. Cool Aid is one program that seems to be having some success with young people, but it lacks firm permanent funding and an assured future. For most segments of the population, programming to find addicts

who will not come forward on their own is extremely difficult.

The addict who does come forward will find the drug abuse treatment system in the local area able to offer him or her a wide range of support and treatment. If institutionalization is needed, Provincial facilities in other places, for example, Edmonton or High Level, might have to be used.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That AADAC convene a project committee representing itself, the RCMP, the Health Unit, the hospital, the doctors, Wapiti Lodge and Cool Aid to
- * resolve the question of a detox centre: need, size,
- * location, support programs, funding, etc.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That AADAC, through its funded agencies
- * program, provide a portion of the core funding for Cool
- * Aid, in rough proportion to the amount of alcohol and
- * drug work that Cool Aid is doing in its total program.

Beyond funding for Cool Aid, there is probably not much more that AADAC can do, that it is not doing now, to find the hidden addict. Continuing education and publicity offer the best hope for getting the message across to people who need help, or who have friends or acquaintances who need help.

2. The Elders

People over the age of 65 make up about 6.3% of the regional population, the total number being about 2,460. They receive services from several directions. Drop-in centres operate in Grande Prairie, La Glace, Sexsmith, Beaverlodge and Hythe. The Grande Spirit Foundation, sponsored by the municipalities, operates self-contained housing and lodges in Grande Prairie and Beaverlodge (and Spirit River). A local committee operates a lodge and self-contained units in Hythe. Self-contained units are under construction in Sexsmith. Grande Prairie has two nursing homes and an auxiliary hospital; Grande Prairie, Beaverlodge and Hythe have hospitals.

A number of programs are offered to elders who still live in their own homes. The Health Unit keeps a "geriatric surveillance" on those over 75 years of age, and provides a wide range of services through Aids to Daily Living and Coordinated Home Care, assisted in the latter by the Victorian Order of Nurses and Preventive Social Services. P.S.S. also provides a coordinator for the Golden Age Centre in Grande Prairie. (Parks and Recreation maintains the building, which was built by one of the service clubs.)

Although services are very extensive, waiting lists exist for the lodges and self-contained units. The process for building new ones is well established, however, and approval has been given for a number of new places.

The only gap that seems to remain in services to elders who are institutionalized or semi-institutionalized is in the area of recreation. P.S.S. hires a coordinator to provide recreation services to the people who attend the Golden Age Centre (with the cost partly paid by the Senior Citizens' Council), but offers no service to other elders. The coordinator carried out an inventory of elders living at home three years ago, but no follow-up was possible. We have recommended, in connection with the P.S.S. evaluation, as follows:

- * RECOMMENDATION: That the Senior Citizens Coordinator
 - * be placed in the Special Groups program of P.S.S.; that
 - * the role of coordinator be separated from the role of
 - * recreation planner for the Golden Age Centre; that the
 - * P.S.S. coordinator function on behalf of all elders
 - * in the community, not just those who attend the centre;
 - * that the coordinator's function be to advocate for better
 - * service on behalf of elders both generally and
 - * specifically; that P.S.S. continue to support the recreation
 - * activities at the Centre by paying one-third of the cost
 - * of a coordinator to be hired directly by the Senior
 - * Citizens Council, with one-third to be paid by Parks
 - * and Recreation, and one-third by the Council itself.
-
- * RECOMMENDATION: That the elders be a priority group
 - * for the P.S.S. Special Groups program generally, and es-
 - * pecially for the system of "neighbourhood" services
 - * created by that program; that as part of this program,
 - * P.S.S. and the Health Unit between them extend "geriatric
 - * surveillance" to everyone over the age of 65.

These recommendations would serve those in institutions and those in their own homes, although the "neighbourhood services" program of P.S.S. would be directed more at the latter group. The next recommendation is also for them:

- * RECOMMENDATION: That route and schedule planning for
- * public transportation take specific account of the
- * location and needs of elders living in their own
- * homes, and that special effort be made to serve them.

This is not to say that the old folks in lodges and self-contained housing should be neglected, but simply that they are not likely to be neglected, because they are heavily concentrated. The ones in their own homes are much more spread out, and are likely to be overlooked.

One very real concern that has been expressed is over present fashions in home design. Many older homes have at least one entrance on or near ground level, so that handicapped people, including many elders, can get in and out without excessive difficulty. Very few new homes have such an entrance. The people who settle in those homes will therefore have to move out when they become old and handicapped, and institutions will have to be provided for

them, in the form of either lodges or self-contained units. This will be very expensive.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That building permit regulations be revised
- * by the municipalities to require that every new house have at
- * least one entrance that can be reached with no more than one
- * step up or down, or be otherwise adaptable for convenient
- * access by elderly people.

Issues concerning the elders come along often enough, and are of sufficient importance and difficulty, to justify the creation of some permanent mechanism for discussing and resolving them.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That the Health Unit organize a planning
- * committee for services to the elders, with representation
- * from the Senior Citizens' Council, other elderly people,
- * P.S.S., the Recreation Board, S.C.O.R.E.S., management of
- * institutions, the Ministerial Association and any other
- * interested groups.

Many of the issues raised by our recommendations could be taken up by this committee, perhaps as a first step towards implementation.

3. Persons with Mental and Physical Handicaps

We have no direct estimate of the total number of people in the Grande Prairie region with mental and physical handicaps. The Services for the Handicapped Branch has had contact with approximately 90 adults from the greater Grande Prairie area within the last year, and is aware of another 30 in services. Another 50 known people do not need service for the time being.

Estimates based on experience elsewhere place the number of physically handicapped at 8% to 9% of the population, and of mentally handicapped at about 3%, of which about a quarter would be severely mentally handicapped. If these statistics held true for the Grande Prairie area, the numbers would be 1,200 mentally handicapped (300 severely) and 3,000 physically handicapped, including elders.

The agency with primary responsibility for services to the handicapped is Alberta Social Services and Community Health. The Services for the Handicapped Branch provides client service coordination for adults; organization and funding of locally-based programs; specialists in residential, vocational and child development programming; and some coordination of services at the general level. The District Office of Social Services provides assured income for the severely handicapped and handicapped children's services, through the Child Protection Branch.

Special education services for handicapped children in the school system have already been listed (Section A-6). These children are also looked after in the day care centres and are given

preferential treatment by the Early Childhood Services program, in that they are allowed into the program at an earlier age. Grande Prairie Regional College encourages handicapped children to come into its Children's Centre, which is used to assist the training of Early Childhood Services workers.

Medical services are obtained from the health care system generally, and through the Health Units aids-to-daily-living program. Handicapped patients are cared for in the nursing homes, where necessary, or sent to institutions in central Alberta if local facilities cannot provide the necessary service.

The Grande Prairie and District Association for the Mentally Retarded operates Swan Industries and a number of group homes. Other local associations involved with handicapped people are the Canadian Paraplegic Association, the Association for the Physically Handicapped, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and the Grande Prairie Employment Development Society (no longer active).

The Employment Development Society was interested in developing long-term employment for handicapped people. This function now rests with the Employment Opportunities Program of Alberta Social Services and Community Health.

Programs for handicapped people in Grande Prairie cover two extremes very well, but not the middle. Those with mild to moderate handicaps are accommodated within the education system, their own homes, and in various training and employment programs, the most important of which is Swan Industries. Those with very severe handicaps who need constant medical care can be put in nursing homes. Those in between, who need intermediate kinds of care, must be sent away. It would appear therefore that the next step in local development of institutional services is "lodge" for the dependent handicapped.

In the absence of such a place, people with moderate handicaps who are not sent away are placed in nursing homes, if they cannot be cared for at home. The effects on the mental health of these people, many of them young, from mixing with the severely handicapped and the very elderly in nursing homes, are not good.

Another major issue concerns access to the community for those who live at home and whose ability to get around is restricted. The community lacks public transportation, and has had no policy on access to public buildings. For example, a handicapped person who wanted to get into City Hall would have great difficulty. Some buildings are partly accessible: for example, a wheelchair person might be able to get into the building, but not use the washrooms.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That the City develop a policy on access
- * to public buildings for mobile handicapped people that will
- * provide them with the greatest possible chance to participate
- * in employment and community affairs on a more or less normal
- * basis, and that it implement this policy in all municipal
- * buildings and facilities (including recreation facilities)
- * and through building permits and development permits for
- * other construction.

Access to public buildings should be supplemented by policies on public transportation and by adequate equipment:

- * RECOMMENDATION: That route and schedule planning for public
- * transportation take specific account of the location and
- * needs of handicapped people, and that special effort be made
- * to serve them, including, if necessary, the acquisition of
- * special vehicles.

Implementation of both these recommendations, evaluation of the need for more local institutions and programs, and continued advocacy of greater sensitivity and service to handicapped people will require an appropriate form of organization.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That the Services to the Handicapped Branch
- * organize a coordinating committee on services to the
- * handicapped, with representation from P.S.S., the various
- * associations and societies, the school boards, the West
- * Central Preschool Society, the nursing homes, the Recreation
- * Board, the Library Board, SCORES, the College, the Health
- * Unit and handicapped people themselves, for the purpose of
- * providing specific advice to the City on transportation and
- * access policies, of evaluating program needs, and advocacy
- * of improvements to service.

4. Single Parents

Single parents have not normally been thought of as a group requiring specific program attention, or as needing a coordinated system of services. Estimates based on our interview sample indicate that about 10% of households, or about 750 households in the City, are headed by a single parent. A survey in St. Joseph's High School found that 9.8% of students, and 17.5% of those in grade 9, were living with one parent. In a sample of elementary school classrooms in the public school system, the proportion was 19%. None of these estimates are very precise, but they indicate the presence of a substantial number of single-parent households.

The community has an interest in the problems of single parents for two reasons. First, they are a substantial minority of the population, with some very significant needs for extra support.

The mechanics of making a living, raising a family and just getting along from day to day are more complicated and more difficult. Second, single parents, by definition, have children, and research results increasingly show that the children of single parents are "at risk" in many ways.

There are, of course, many stable and well-doing families with single-parent heads, whose children perform well at school and stay out of trouble. As one study said, quality of parenting may be more important than quantity of parents.

Much of the general strategy proposed in Chapter IV is of direct relevance to the problems of single parents, particularly the actions designed to restrain increases in living costs (especially housing), the Family Life Program, the "Know Your Neighbours" Program, and physical planning of residential areas. We have recommended that single parents be one of the special groups under the P.S.S. Special Groups Program, with its system of neighbourhood services. Single parents also have some specific needs of their own.

The most pressing need for most single parents is some form of child care covering their working time. Parents with pre-school children can obtain this service through day home care and the day care centres. These services are well spoken of, but the number of places is limited. Waiting lists now total about 100 places.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That planning of a new day care centre
- * begin immediately through the Child Development and Youth
- * Services Planning Committee of P.S.S., the probable
- * location of the centre being in the northern part of the
- * City.

All communities need good after school-care for those single parents with school-aged children. Ideally this would be provided in the schools, and would be planned jointly by P.S.S., Parks and Recreation, the schools, and the parents.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That planning of after-school care be
- * undertaken as a matter of urgency by the Child Development
- * and Youth Services Planning Committee of P.S.S.

These matters will be considered again in the next two sections.

Provision of a sufficient number of day care spaces and a good after-school program would take care of those single parents who work normal hours. Those in shift work have much more difficulty. Although it would be nice to find some community response for these parents, we have concluded that private baby-sitting arrangements are the best feasible solution for them.

The communities, through P.S.S., could maintain a registry and establish a licensing procedure similar to that for day care homes, if demand warrants.

Another issue of concern to single parents is transportation. Institution of public transportation will be of benefit to them, if routes and schedules are appropriately set.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That routing and scheduling of buses take
- * into account the need of single parents to get their
- * children into and out of day care centres before and after
- * work.

The final specific need of single parents is for civic housing, which has already been discussed (pages 71-72).

5. Pre-School Children

This is a large topic and a very important one in any society, but especially in the Grande Prairie area, to which are migrating many young families.

Most pre-school children are looked after by their parents. The parents organize or take advantage of various programs, such as play-schools, Indoor Playground, Mother's Day Out, and Time Out. Once children reach the age of 5 (younger for handicapped children) they can attend Early Childhood Services programs offered by the school boards in the City, and by the West Central Preschool Society in the County and smaller centres. Special preventive health care is provided by the Health Unit.

Children of single or working parents attend the day care centres, or are looked after by private baby sitters, or at approved (by P.S.S.) day care homes.

Groups of parents who organize to provide services — playschools, E.C.S. programs, or whatever — can receive help from the Parent Resources Unit, a branch of Social Services and Community Health with a consultant based in Grande Prairie.

Official, and probably unofficial Alberta is in a mixed state of mind about programming for pre-school children. On the one hand, the Province has developed the Early Childhood Services program, which was designed to support parental initiatives and give the maximum amount of scope for parent-designed curriculum, for children of ages 0 to 8. On the other hand, the program has been implemented only in the form of kindergartens for children aged about 5, and seems stalled there. In many jurisdictions, and the City of Grande Prairie is one of them, kindergartens are becoming increasingly institutionalized in the school system, with little effective participation of the parents.

The West Central Preschool Society is still trying to operate within the spirit of the original concept, and to give the Local Advisory Committees of parents a real function in planning and implementation of the classroom program. They are finding that difficult at times; a good deal of the pressure for institutionalization and "letting the professionals do it" comes from the parents.

We have been advocating increased participation of parents with children in many forms of community activity. The E.C.S. Concept in its original form provides a framework and a system of support for doing this for 8 years of a child's life, that is, nearly half the time the child is dependent on his or her parents. We recognize that to carry out the concept would consume large amounts of parental time and energy, and that many parents would sooner not be bothered. But despite that, and despite the many difficulties, it seems to us that the long-term interest of the community lies in continued efforts to keep the parents involved, and that the effort to carry out the E.C.S. concept should not be allowed to die down.

We have recommended that P.S.S. create a Child Development and Youth Services Planning Committee with broad responsibility for program planning for children. This committee should include, besides E.C.S., representatives of parents, the school boards, the West Central Preschool Society, various components of the leisure services system, and the Health Unit. The task of coordinating development of an E.C.S.-type program broadly in the community should be undertaken by that group.

In the County and smaller centres, the logical group to undertake coordination of actual program development is the West Central Preschool Society. It is a fairly new organization, probably not yet able to take over the full responsibility, but that should be its medium-term objective.

- * RECOMMENDATION: That the West Central Preschool Society
- * begin to set long-term plans for extending the scope of
- * its interests, with the ultimate objective of full
- * implementation of the original E.C.S. concept in its
- * participating communities. The first step would be to
- * take over the rural playschools now operated under P.S.S.,
- * through a transfer of funding from P.S.S. to the Society.

In the City, the situation is more complex, and less well organized. The process of institutionalization of E.C.S. is well advanced. The Committee could approach the problem there in two ways, first, by helping parents organize play-schools and other activities in line with the E.C.S. concept, using funding from present sources, and second, by approaching the school boards and trying to revive interest in effective use of the Local Advisory Committees of parents of kindergarten children.

The other approach should be to the Provincial Government, who still seems interested in the E.C.S. concept, but which is

reluctant to finance the creation of yet another massive school system for the younger children. By working out a detailed, non-institutional approach for broad-scale implementation of E.C.S., the Committee, the West Central Preschool Society and the regional communities might be able to interest the Province in comprehensive funding.

Those children left with baby-sitters or in day-care by parents have more difficulty benefiting from various programs. Their access may be restricted because the baby-sitter does not want to take them to play-school or kindergarten. Single parents often have neither the time nor the energy to take part in planning and implementation of programs. Children who are missing both parents must live in foster homes, or in places like the Grace Children's Home in Dimsdale. The "parents" in these places often show great dedication and skill, but their numbers are limited.

The problem of access to programs for these special groups of children should be taken up by the Child Development and Youth Services Committee as part of the planning process. The solution probably lies in some form of registration and provision of transportation.

6. Youth

We believe that the most important additions to youth programming that we are recommending are the Family Life Program and the recommendations in the previous section. These offer the best hope for preventing youth problems. It is by no means clear that these can be treated effectively on any broad scale, if treatment is left until both the young person and the problem have matured, although specific successes are possible.

Grande Prairie has some very fine youth programs, and a very large number of activities for young people of both sexes and all ages. The John Howard Society, the Youth Assessment Centre, Cool Aid, Croken House, Teen Challenge, the School-Community Liaison program of P.S.S., and the school system have already been described. The Youth Program Grande Prairie, funded by Social Services and Community Health, provides recreation programming, "reality" therapy (showing what it's like to be in jail), life skills and drug abuse education, and community service work for young delinquents and near-delinquents. South Peace Planned Parenthood, sponsored by the Health Unit, offers education and counselling in sexual matters, and works closely with the schools.

Added to these are Parks and Recreation programs, church programs, scouts, guides, cadets, 4-H, C.G.I.T. and so on. The schools have active intra-mural athletics programs and all kinds

of extra-curricular activities. Truly, the young person who wants to take part in organized activities will have no difficulty finding something to do.

An additional source of activity is the present job market. The survey at St. Joseph's High School found that the percentage of students working every day and on weekends was:

Grade 12 - 49%;
Grade 11 - 28%;
Grade 10 - 18%;
Grade 9 - 12%.

And yet, idleness and time-wasting among many young people still concern many adults, and lead to trouble-making. Many young people are attracted to "the street", a recreation and social ground that can teach them many bad habits, and which often leads to serious trouble.

We have recommended elsewhere that the School-Community Liaison Program of P.S.S. be extended full-scale into the elementary schools and earlier if possible, as a preventive measure. We would recommend that representatives of youth programs be involved on the Child Development and Youth Services Committee, in order that they may influence the programming being done for very young children, and so that the programmers for those children be exposed to the problems that are waiting down the line. This representation should certainly include South Peace Planned Parenthood, the Youth Program, and the John Howard Society.

Access to programs for the very young children of single parents and for children in foster homes is an important part of the preventive aspect of these programs. These are generally agreed to be the children at risk. If they miss the programs, then much of the preventive force will be lost.

The young person who wants activities can find them. The young person who gets in trouble can find programs, counselling and support. We have recommended strengthening family life and other preventive measures. We certainly recommend continued support of present programs. We seriously question whether much more can be done. At some point the parents and the young people themselves become responsible.

One idea that was often mentioned was for a "drop-in" centre, an unprogrammed recreation facility for young people. This would certainly be a constructive substitute for "the street" if young people would take advantage of it. The possibility could be examined by the Child Development and Youth Services Committee, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, or both.

Planning of routes and schedules for the new public transportation system should not neglect the young people. No doubt the movement of students to and from school would be taken into account in any case. After-school schedules should also allow for travel from schools to major recreation facilities such as the Recplex, skating rinks, etc.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

1. Recapitulation

(1) Terms of Reference and Research Method

The Study objectives were to project population numbers and characteristics on the basis of predicted economic activity, review various social services, assess the effect of population growth on these services, collect perceptions from residents, recommend improvements to services and methods of managing rapid growth, and, as a separate but related project, to evaluate Grande Prairie's Preventive Social Services Program.

The Study area included the City and County of Grande Prairie, Beaverlodge, Sexsmith, Wembley and Hythe.

The Steering Committee was chaired by a representative of the Grande Prairie and District United Way; members came from various local agencies. A Community Resource Group was organized to bring more agencies into the Study process. Funding came mainly from Alberta Tourism and Small Business and Alberta Environment, through the efforts of the Northern Alberta Development Council, with additional support from the City of Grande Prairie, Dome Petroleum, Union Oil and other local agencies.

The most important source of information was formal interviews, with households in the City and the County through a random sampling process, with households in Beaverlodge, Sexsmith, Wembley and Hythe through an ad hoc sampling process, and with representatives of social service agencies. The total number of interviews was 379. Other sources of information were non-formal contacts with people, formal meetings, Study meetings and workshops with the Steering Committee and the Community Resource Group, direct observations by the research staff, and other related literature.

All conclusions have their roots explicitly or implicitly in the formal interviews; different kinds of interviews were used to double-check each other. The other sources were used in a supplementary way. A good deal of judgement went into the analysis, which was compensated for by consultation with the Steering Committee and members of the Community Resource Group during analysis, and by tailoring recommendations to the prevailing degree of uncertainty.

(2) Regional Growth and Economic Outlook

The region's basic economic activities are agriculture, forestry, and the oil and gas industry. Prospects for all of these,

and therefore for the region as a whole, are judged to be reasonably solid, although economic and political developments in the oil and gas industry will probably cause development to fluctuate, as in the past. Average regional population growth for the decade 1976 to 1985 is expected to be between 5½% and 6%, so that the population will reach between 48,000 and 50,000 by 1985. The present population is 38,800, and growth has been averaging over 10% per year for the past two years.

(3) The Reactions of People to Population Growth in the Grande Prairie Region

Rapid growth in the region has produced sharp increases in household formation, and in the clientele of migrant services such as the Salvation Army's Wapiti Lodge and the Canada Employment Centre. Statistics on other social service agencies, such as the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission, do not show such spectacular increases; somewhat perplexingly, the statistics for Mental Health Services show sharp decreases. The incidence of criminal offences and traffic accidents has risen sharply.

Major effects have been felt more strongly in the City than in the rest of the region, even though other communities such as Sexsmith and Wembley have grown more quickly.

Irritants aside, major effects have not been generally felt in the communities. Many well-established families have not had their lives unduly disrupted, and may even have benefited substantially from growth. Serious effects tended to be felt most strongly by the elderly, especially those living near the downtown area; renters on fixed or moderate incomes; first-time home buyers; single parents; and youths.

Growth and construction activity have produced many irritants, in traffic and parking, line-ups, dirt and noise, etc. People have become wary or even fearful of crime, although recorded crimes are mainly against property; violence is relatively rare. Living costs have risen sharply, on top of which households experience economic pressure produced by high consumption and comparisons with others in the community. Rapidly-shifting population characteristics have created problems with physical planning. Residents find the presence of large numbers of young men employed in oilfield work and construction distressing, especially since these people have come to dominate life in the downtown area. The City has been the destination for many job-seeking migrants, and all communities have many new households. All this has produced pressures on youths, and on family, neighbourhood and community life.

(4) Strategic Recommendations

The City will require the most complex strategy, to deal with

rapid growth. The recommended elements of this strategy are: coordination of services by means of committees containing representatives of agencies and the general public; redefinition of the terms of reference for physical planning of new neighbourhoods and the community as a whole; a program to help strengthen family life, operated by P.S.S. and involving many agencies; a "Know Your Neighbours" program coordinated by the City; a coordinated approach to management of services to migrants involving all the concerned agencies; and a cost of living program operated through a new Prices and Rents Board.

The smaller centres require a less elaborate strategy and will, to some extent, benefit from improvements in the City. All communities could benefit from their own family life and "Know Your Neighbour" programs, appropriately tailored to local circumstances, and from enlargement of the scope of physical planning.

(5) The Social Services System: Sectoral Descriptions and Recommendations

(a) Major Services

(i) Preventive Social Services

P.S.S. was found to have great potential to provide service in the present circumstances, potential that has not yet been fully realized. In order to concentrate the agency's efforts in preventive directions, combination of existing programs into two main programs was recommended: a Special Groups Program to serve elders, people with mental and physical handicaps, single parents and newcomers to the community by, among other things, establishing a network of neighbourhood services through volunteers (the Volunteer Services Bureau would be dedicated to this Program); and a Child Development and Youth Services Program, with its own planning Committee, to seek a unified approach to pre-school programming, and to extend present preventive work to children of younger ages.

Two new programs were recommended: a Family Life Program with its own planning Committee, and a Community Liaison Program to place community workers in the smaller centres of the region. The evaluation also recommended that P.S.S. establish its own research arm, and that the P.S.S. Board be expanded to include people who are not members of municipal councils from each member community.

(ii) Law Enforcement and Crime Prevention

The Study found that the Grande Prairie RCMP detachment is seriously short of manpower, and recommended an increase of at least 1 officer per shift, and preferably two. No recommendations were made for the court system or for the attendant social service agencies, except that the need for more half-way house beds needs to be examined.

(iii) Public Transportation

The new public transportation system in the City, due to begin operations in the Spring, has great potential as a social service. The Study recommends that the City invite social service agencies to participate in planning of routes and schedules, in order to ensure that the needs of various specialized groups are at least considered in planning.

(iv) Health Care

The region has a highly-developed system of health care, with well established processes for generating improvements as need requires and as the population grows to support them. No recommendations are made by this Study. Because of perplexities surrounding the Mental Health Services statistics, a formal evaluation of that program was suggested.

(v) Leisure Services

Leisure services too are in a highly-developed state, with excellent sporting, cultural, library and further education facilities and programs. The system has its own processes for expansion and improvement, and these function well. Recommendations are made to bring the leisure services system into full participation in the Family Life and "Know Your Neighbours" programs.

(vi) Education

The education system, both elementary/secondary and post-secondary, is large and well developed, with active expansion and improvement processes. The elementary/secondary system has a wide range of special programs, in addition to the regular ones. No recommendations are made, beyond suggestions for participation of the system in the other strategic programs.

(vii) Emergency Services

No serious issues were raised concerning emergency services. Processes for improvement are in place and seem to be working.

(viii) Housing

Many of the concerns about housing are taken care of by the recommendations on physical planning, which must include provision for adequate numbers and types of housing. The Study recommends that planning also try to preserve the older neighbourhoods of the city. Active consideration of expansion of Civic Housing is recommended.

(ix) Spiritual Care

The area has many churches of many different kinds. Active participation by the churches in the Family Life and neighbourhood

programs is suggested.

(b) Services to Specific Client Groups

(i) Abusers of Drugs and Alcohol

Primary responsibility for service to these people rests with the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission. The Study recommends that AADAC convene a project committee to resolve the question of a detox centre, and that AADAC provide some funding for the Cool Aid program.

(ii) Elders

Many services are available for elders, but many needs still exist. The Study recommends changes to the role of the P.S.S. Senior Citizens' coordinator and a new funding formula; elders should be a priority group for the P.S.S. Special Groups Program and its system of neighbourhood services. Special planning to ensure that the public transportation system is well designed to serve elders is recommended. In order to ensure that housing will always be available for elders who wish to stay in their own homes, the Study recommends changes to building codes to ensure that they are potentially accessible by handicapped people. Finally, the Study recommends creation of an Elders' Planning Committee, organized by the Health Unit, to coordinate planning and programming.

(iii) Persons with Mental and Physical Handicaps

Many services exist for handicapped people, especially for those considered trainable. The region is not properly serviced with institutions for the dependent handicapped, unless the handicap is severe enough for the person to need nursing-home care. Transportation and access to buildings are the most important local issues, and recommendations for changes to planning processes for public buildings and for planning of public transportation routes, schedules and equipment are made. In order to improve coordination and planning, a coordinating committee on services to the handicapped is recommended, with broad representation among interested agencies.

(iv) Single Parents

These have not generally been considered as a group requiring special program attention, but they are a substantial minority with very significant needs for extra support. Single parents will benefit from the Cost of Living, Family Life and neighbourhood programs ("Know Your Neighbour and P.S.S."). It appears that a new day-care centre is needed, and action to plan that is recommended, along with planning of after-school care by P.S.S. Single parents also have special needs from the public transportation system.

(v) Pre-School Children

Because so many migrants are young families, services to pre-school children are especially important. The most fruitful avenue for development of coordinated services, in a way that would complement the Family Life Program, is through the Alberta Early Childhood Services concept, which has been implemented only on a limited scale. The West Central Preschool Society appears to have the necessary base to broaden its activities, and planning for that step is recommended. The situation is less well organized in the City, but the first steps could be taken by P.S.S.

(vi) Youth

Grande Prairie has many fine youth programs, and a wide range of activities for those young people who are interested in such things. Preventive work probably needs to begin with much younger people, since most youth programs seem to start too late. Consideration should be given to some sort of unprogrammed recreation or drop-in facility to replace "the street" for young people, and their interests need to be taken into account in planning public transportation.

2. Implementation (City)

This Study was not commissioned by a single agency, and thus the responsibility for implementation is not easy to place. The United Way, which spear-headed the Study at the community end, certainly does not wish to be caught up in the involved process of implementation, although it might be persuaded to take part in some monitoring procedure.

The key to implementation lies in creation of the various Boards and committees that have been recommended. Each of those has had a lead agency specified, and that agency should undertake the negotiations leading to formation of these groups. Each group can then consider the specific matters that lie within its terms of reference, and plan its program, either guided by this Study, or not, as it chooses.

The Workshop on October 9 agreed that the first step in implementation would be a meeting early in January to discuss this Report and decide on the next best steps. We would assume that the merits of the various boards and committees would be discussed then, as well as their proposed membership.

3. Implementation (County and Smaller Centres)

In Chapter IV, Section B (page 51) we outlined a strategic program for the smaller centres that would be applicable to Sexsmith, Wembley, Beaverlodge, Hythe, Clairmont, and might well be useful too in the smaller hamlets, housing subdivisions and farming areas of the County. It consisted essentially of a Family Life Program and a "Know Your Neighbours" program in each centre. New community workers have been recommended for P.S.S., and these would be stationed in the three towns and Hythe.

Some of the committees recommended for the City are, or could be regional in scope. The Old Folks' Committee and the Child Development and Youth Services Committee could be regional in nature; both are led by regional agencies (Health Unit and P.S.S.). Each community should have its own Family Life Committee.

The initiative for implementation of ideas in the smaller centres and the County rests with the councils, probably with the assistance of P.S.S.

4. Implementation and Predictions

Finally, we promised to discuss the degree to which these recommendations depend on the predictions we are making about future development.

In our view, all the recommendations for specific sectors in Chapter V are relevant to planning and delivery of service to people that are in the region now. If growth is slow for the next few years, or if it is fast, the needs will be pretty much the same, although the numbers of people and the pace of that need may change. Similarly, the Family Life, "Know Your Neighbours", physical planning, cost of living and coordination programs are based on present need, that is not likely to diminish no matter how the future unfolds.

The only section that might change if growth slows down concerns migrant services; clearly, if the in-flow of migrants is greatly reduced, then that committee would eventually find itself with little to do, in which case it would not need to meet. But its immediate implementation is not dependent on that. It has some immediate issues to resolve; once it has done that, it can assess its future work.

5. Omitted Groups

We recognize that some groups of users of social services have not been mentioned in this Report; two of these are likely to be controversial.

First, it is unusual to find a report dealing with northern Alberta that does not discuss native people, since they are among the most significant users of social services throughout the entire region. We did not neglect native people in this study: several were interviewed in City households; we paid a visit to the Horse Lake Reserve; we talked with people at the Friendship Centre; and of course interviewed representatives of agencies that serve native people. We concluded from this that native people need many services, but that their needs can best be looked after by the "main-stream" programs in the region. Native single parents, unemployed persons or young people need programs for single parents, unemployed people or young people, as the case may be. They do not seem to need programs for native people. On top of that, we would suggest that the interests of both native people and the communities at large lie in greater integration of native people into the "main-stream", not in segregation into special programs.

These findings underline the fact that Grande Prairie is an unusual community in northern Alberta, since that area contains many communities where sets of special native programs are necessary.

Similar kinds of arguments apply to another excluded group: the "poor", or people with low incomes who are dependent on public support. Their interests are served especially by the Cost of Living Program and public transportation. Aggressive pursuit of the "Know Your Neighbour" Program would help them too.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Terms of Reference

Grande Prairie Region Community Impact Study

Background

In the past decade, the Grande Prairie area has experienced rapid growth. The population of the area* increased from 24,353 in 1971 to 34,373 in 1979.** The largest amount of population growth has occurred in the City of Grande Prairie. During this period, its population increased by approximately 56% from 13,079 in 1971 to 20,429 in 1979.**

Several developments have contributed to this rapid population growth. In 1973, the opening of Procter and Gamble's large kraft pulp mill created a large number of employment opportunities in the forestry sector. Since the discovery of a large gas field near Elmworth west of Grande Prairie in 1976, intensive exploration activity has encouraged a large amount of in-migration. The City's business, retail and service sectors have all experienced large expansion to serve the increased population and economic activity in the area.

There are indications that the growth which has occurred in the past decade will continue. The Grande Prairie Area Growth Study (1979) analyzed market conditions and surveyed business firms in the City to prepare employment and population projections for the area. They concluded that several sectors of the local economy, including oil and gas, construction, forestry and service sectors would all continue to expand. According to their estimates, between 3,340 and 6,665 additional employment opportunities could be created in the area by 1985. The area's population could subsequently increase by between 8,694 and 16,920 people. For the City of Grande Prairie, they estimated that by 1985, its population could increase to between 25,939 and 30,792 residents.

Although the increased population and economic activity has brought many benefits to residents and groups in the communities, there are indications that many groups are experiencing difficulties in dealing with the rapid rate of growth. Employees with several social and service agencies in Grande Prairie have stated that the large number of in-migrants has placed heavy demands on their services. In addition, many have expressed difficulties in planning for the future delivery of services because of uncertainties over the amount and timing of the future population growth and the specific types of demands that could be placed on their services.

A few months ago, the Grande Prairie and District United Way became interested in having a Community Impact Assessment (C.I.A.) conducted for the Grande Prairie area. They felt that the type of information gathered in a C.I.A. would assist them in prioritizing their allotment of funds to member agencies, as well as help agencies to prepare future budgets and plans.

In the third week of February [1980], a United Way sub-committee sent out approximately 50 letters to organizations and agencies within Grande Prairie and the surrounding area. The letters outlined the type of problems that could be

* City of Grande Prairie, Beaverlodge, Sexsmith, Hythe, Wembley, County No. 1

** Hollinshead, Lefrançois and Associates. Grande Prairie Area Growth Study; 1979

experienced in rapid growth communities and how a C.I.A. could be used by local groups and agencies to minimize them. Enclosed was a brief questionnaire which asked respondents to indicate their interest in having this type of study conducted, whether they would provide information, and be interested in sitting in on an overview committee.

To date, the sub-committee has received approximately 30 written responses to the questionnaire. The majority of the respondents supported the need for the study and a large number indicated that they would sit on an overview committee.

In the past few months, the Grande Prairie and District Preventive Social Services Board (P.S.S.) has also expressed concern over the effect of rapid growth on the community. In January, the Board submitted a request to the Northern Alberta Development Council (N.A.D.C.) for funding of a study to assist them in evaluating the effectiveness of their programs in meeting current and future social problems.

On March 14, 1980, members of the United Way sub-committee and P.S.S. met with N.A.D.C. staff members to compare the two groups' objectives for a study and discuss the possibilities of obtaining N.A.D.C. funding. It was agreed at the meeting that both groups had similar objectives and that an evaluation of the P.S.S. program could be part of an overall assessment of community problems. A N.A.D.C. staff member described the procedure for the group to follow to apply for funding.

Representatives of agencies and organizations who had received the letter and questionnaire attended a meeting on March 24, 1980, to determine the future course of action to take. It was decided at the meeting to submit a proposal to the N.A.D.C. for funding of a C.I.A. study. The main reasons that the group decided to apply to the N.A.D.C. for funding include:

- (1) An Environmental Impact Assessment study (E.I.A.) and C.I.A. will not be called for by Alberta Environment in the Grande Prairie area because its growth is not attributable to the actions of one company.
- (2) It does not appear feasible that funding for the study can be obtained from local sources.
- (3) The proposed study's objectives fall within the N.A.D.C.'s mandate, "to investigate, monitor, evaluate, plan and promote practical measures to foster and advance general development in Northern Alberta."

The United Way agreed to be the lead agency to initiate and administer the study. A steering committee comprising representatives from the United Way, P.S.S., and local agencies was established to formulate objectives for a study and develop a proposal to submit to the N.A.D.C.

The following proposal emerged from their discussions. It outlines the committee's objectives for a study, identifies the specific areas that they feel should be addressed and discusses the organization of the study — the roles of the community groups and the consultant.

Study Objectives and Approach

The following is to be achieved by the study:

- (1) Review economic activity in the area to develop projections for the amount of population growth likely to be experienced, the timing, and the demographic and economic characteristics of the population.
- (2) For each of the following, review the present level of services offered and discuss their relationship to the community's social well-being:
 - i. Education
 - ii. Leisure Activities
 - iii. Health Care
 - iv. Social Services
 - v. Housing
 - vi. Police and Fire Protection
- (3) Assess the impact of future population growth on these services in order to determine potential problem areas. Some of the issues which should be addressed in this analysis include:
 - i. Education - will facilities be provided in time to meet demands?
- will the variety of programs and services demanded by the new population be available?
 - ii. Leisure Activities
- what new facilities and programs will be demanded?
- can they be provided given existing fiscal constraints?
 - iii. Health Care
- can the level of services required by an expanding population be provided, given current guidelines?
 - iv. Social Services
- what types of problems are likely to arise?
- will programs and services be available to assist residents in dealing with these problems?
- will existing agencies be able to accommodate additional demands?
 - v. Housing - will housing at a suitable price and tenure be available to meet the demands?
 - vi. Police and Fire Protection
- can additional demands be accommodated?
- (4) Conduct a community survey in order to identify residents' perceptions on the social and service needs of the community and how they will be affected by continued population growth.
- (5) Assess the adequacy of the existing information. Identify the type of data needed to enable a clearer identification of the existing situation and potential impacts.
- (6) In addition to the overall community assessment, conduct a confidential evaluation of P.S.S. in order to make suggestions on future directions for its internal use.
- (7) Review studies and reports which have documented the social and service

problems experienced in other growth communities and their attempts to deal with them. Suggest measures which could be investigated by groups in Grande Prairie to minimize the impacts of rapid growth.

Study Process

One of the main objectives of the group is that members of local organizations and agencies in the community will have a strong role in the study. Active involvement by the community groups will ensure that their views and concerns are addressed.

The United Way — the initiator of the study — established a steering committee to administer the study and organize community members' involvement in it. The main functions of the steering committee include:

- (1) Establishing terms of reference for the study.
- (2) Selecting and supervising the consultant.
- (3) Preparing information obtained from the Community Resource Group (C.R.G.)
- (4) Evaluating data obtained by the consultant.
- (5) Assisting in predicting and evaluating impacts.
- (6) Approving the report.

The second community group established by the United Way is the C.R.G.. The C.R.G. is composed of representatives of local organizations and agencies who had expressed interest in the study and had agreed to provide some assistance to it. Members of the C.R.G. will be available individually as resource people to provide data to the consultant and discuss his interpretations of the findings. The C.R.G. will also assist the steering committee in establishing terms of reference for the study and predicting and evaluating potential impacts.

In addition to working with the two community groups, the consultant will be encouraged to develop an ongoing consultation with the community throughout the study. This will help ensure that individual community members' views are taken into consideration.

Study Area

The study area will be the City of Grande Prairie, the Town of Beaverlodge, the Villages of Sexsmith, Hythe and Wembley, and the County of Grande Prairie.

Study Result

A comprehensive report in which potential social and service problems are clearly identified in layman's terms so that the various agencies and groups in the community can use this information to help minimize the adverse social effects which can accompany rapid growth.

Reporting

The United Way anticipates that close contact will be maintained with the consultant throughout the study. There will be frequent meetings between the consultant and the steering committee to keep members informed of the consultant's

progress.

The specific reporting procedure will be worked out with the consultant.

Report Format

The study will be organized into two reports. The main report will present the findings of the study. Detailed information on each area will be contained in a separate appendix report.

Report Preparation

The consultant will provide interim materials to the steering committee to enable them to evaluate the consultant's progress.

The consultant will submit 10 copies of the final report to the steering committee in a form suitable for reproduction. Further duplication of the report will be the responsibility of the United Way.

Benefits of the Study

The United Way feels that local residents and groups will receive several important benefits from a community impact study.

- (1) The study will consolidate information from several sources into one document. This will make information on present characteristics of the community accessible to local residents and groups.
- (2) The study will assist local residents and groups in gaining an understanding on how the overall community and their specific interest area may be affected by future population growth.
- (3) By providing a description of the problems that can accompany rapid growth and the type of measures that have been adopted by other rapid growth communities, the study will assist groups and agencies in developing strategies to deal with the potential social and service problems.

Distributed by the Steering Committee,
April 30, 1980.

APPENDIX B
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APPENDIX C

IDEAS FOR A GENERAL THEORY ON SOCIAL SERVICES AND THE SOCIAL EFFECTS OF RAPID POPULATION GROWTH

Research into the effects of rapid population growth ("social impact research" or "socio-economic impact research") has not evolved to the point where development of an explicit theoretical base is possible. The complexity of populations and the effects they experience may mean that the point is never reached. But enough empirical work has been done to support some preliminary generalizations.

An "explicit theoretical base" is simply a precise, preferably mathematical expression of the relationships between causes and effects. It results in a "model" which can be used for development of research methods in applications to specific cases, and as a device for predicting effects.

The impacting agent is represented by a set of "exogenous variables" or outside forces that are triggered by events outside a particular region or community. The impacted area is represented by another set of variables with known relationships among themselves. When the outside forces hit, they induce changes in the inside (or "endogenous") variables which in turn induce changes in each other.

If we can think in terms of crude physical analogies, the impacting agent is a kind of projectile, which "hits" a target. The effect on the target depends on the nature of the projectile (Is it a nerf ball or a rock?) and on the nature of the target (Is it glass, wood, concrete, a pillow, or a puddle of water?). The most desirable target is one which can absorb the impact without damage to itself. Thus in predicting effects of rapid population growth, the nature of the impacting agent and the absorptive capacity of the area affected will have primary importance.

What is "Rapid Population Growth?"

It is tempting to define "rapid" in simple numerical terms, such as a growth rate of 5% per year or more for three years, or 10% growth in one year, or some such. A simple numerical formula may, however, be a poor basis for prediction of effects.

A qualitative, more complicated definition of "rapid growth" may be "a surge in population for which the area affected is unprepared by recent experience." A town that has had no growth

for years, and suddenly gets 5%, may feel a "boom". A town which has had 5% for years, and gets it again, probably will not, although if that town got 10%, then it might too feel the effects.

Impact and Absorptive Capacity

The effects of an impacting agent will depend on four of its own characteristics, and five characteristics of the population.

The important characteristics of the impacting agent are:

(i) Size.

The larger the new development in workers, new households, machinery, money, etc., the greater the disruption, other things being equal.

(ii) Proximity

The more physical distance between the actual development and the population, the less the disruption. Something being built 10 miles away disturbs a community less than something on the main street. Workers living in camps near the site cause less disruption than those domiciled in the town itself. Maximum disruption would result from a development being constructed close to a community which domiciles the workers and serves as their centre for recreation.

(iii) Length of Stay

A very brief stay, however convulsive, disrupts a community less than a more prolonged one. After a certain time, however, people, facilities and services have a chance to adjust and effects diminish. The most disruptive development therefore is one which stays an intermediate time.

(iv) Types of People

Different kinds of developments bring different kinds of people, and effects will depend on whether the work force and its attendants are young or middle-aged, male or female, married or single, drunken or teetotal, etc.

The important characteristics of the area affected are:

(i) Size

A population that is large will be better able to absorb impacts than a small one.

(ii) Culture

People whose culture is rooted in economic development,

who have been able to build it into their way of life, will feel less disruption than those for whom it is a new or alien experience.

(iii) Social Defences

Some people (and some cultures) are better able than others to keep unwelcome people at a distance, and to prevent disruptive impositions. This trait is related to cultural characteristics, to social institutions such as land tenure, and to social services such as policing.

(iv) Services

The effects of new development will be lessened if services are in place, both the every-day services that all people need (stores, doctors, housing, etc.) and special services for helping with the specific effects of change.

(v) Escape Routes

Local situations cannot be viewed in isolation. An affected community may have very low absorptive capacity by itself, but may have a larger centre within driving distance. If so, then effects will be much less disruptive.

Adjusting to an Impact

It is usually the case that the characteristics of the impacting agent are outside local control, especially after the decision to proceed has been taken by the agent, or approval has been given by government. Four of the five important characteristics of the affected area are also outside local control, at least in the short term in which areas must normally react to or prepare for an impact.

The services available in an area can usually be changed, especially if an area is given some warning of an impending development. People must have basic services such as shopping facilities, housing, medical services, some recreation and so on, and the better these are, the less the effects will be.

Another group of services are "social services" which are of many kinds, but which generally are provided through public agencies like governments or charitable organizations.

Why Do People Need Social Services?

(i) Because of "Problems"

"Problems" are situations that cause distress or unhappiness severe enough to impair an individual's ability to

function: that is, to provide for his or her own needs or take care of dependents. Services are motivated by concern for individual well-being and by practicality, since if people cannot look after themselves and their dependents, then society usually ends up caring for them. Examples of "problem-related" services are medical care; mental health and other counselling services; many youth programs.

(ii) To Provide Support

Many services exist simply to make people's lives easier and to help them care for themselves and their dependents, even in the absence of problems. Provision of these services may be based on convenience or need, or on a desire to prevent the development of "problems". Examples of these services are public transportation, day care, home-maker services and a host of others.

(iii) To Control Anti-Social Behaviour

Many services are designed to prevent, punish, treat, or otherwise control behaviour that is troublesome to other people. Examples are the police and court systems, some youth programs, child protection services, etc.

(iv) To Encourage "Socialization"

Some services are designed to orient people according to prevailing social objectives, and to give them the necessary skills. These objectives may be economic, political, or both. This is the purpose of the public education system.

(v) To Enrich People's Lives and Experience

This covers a very wide range of religious, cultural, educational, recreational, artistic and just plain pleasurable activities designed to increase people's ability to enjoy life and to enhance their personal capacities.

The Importance of Interdependence

A great many people depend on other people; for example, wives that are not in the labour force, children, disabled people, many old people, etc. As long as interdependencies hold up, then all is well. But when they break down, substitutes become necessary, usually in order to prevent more serious forms of personal breakdown, and these substitutes achieve almost the stature of basic needs.

For example, a single parent "needs" day care in a very fundamental way: without it her/his life would be so much more complicated and stressful, that the availability of the service can be said to be basic to sound mental health.

It appears that people can be sorted into categories according to their ability to be self-supporting economically and/or physically, and according to the state of their interdependencies with other people. These categories can be ordered according to the amount and type of service they need. In order to minimize the cost of public services, the object of public policy becomes to put people and to hold people in the highest possible category.

At one extreme lie those people who normally care for themselves both economically and physically, and do not have anyone else depending on them. They will need basic services and some enrichment. At the other extreme are those who are totally dependent, both physically and economically (such as children and the impoverished handicapped), and have no one to take care of them. Society must take over their support, or they die.

Those who are personally independent, but have others depending on them, do not require much extra service as long as the demands of their dependents do not conflict with their ability to remain self-supporting. When those demands do conflict, as often with single parents, then services are needed.

Those who are dependent economically but healthy physically do not require extra service (beyond basic needs) as long as their source of economic support holds up. When it breaks down, some substitute must be provided, either through programs to make them self-supporting, or through direct aid. Those who are physically dependent fit into various categories, according to the presence or absence of independent financial means. If a decrepit or handicapped person can pay for his own care, then public support is not needed. If he cannot, then it is.

Classification of individuals in an ordered system of categories in this way clears the path for definition of three important types of social service: treatment, development and prevention. At any particular stage in his or her life, a person will normally fit into a particular category. Temporary disruptions (illness, unemployment, etc.) may cause a slide into a lower one. The object of treatment, therefore, is to restore the person to his or her normal category. The object of prevention is to anticipate the reasons for temporary or permanent transfer into a lower category, and to take action that will maintain the person where he or she is. The object of development is to move people from a lower normal category into a higher one.

Preventive Service

As with medical care, all social service should have prevention as its ultimate objective. More specifically, the object of public policy in approaching "boom" situations should be to take the initiative through preventive programs. Realism requires that treatment be in place as well, because in the existing

state of society, preventive programs will not be fully effective. But too often public policy becomes preoccupied with treatment, because the results are more visible, and because the need for treatment is often acute. The results of prevention are inherently invisible; they can only be inferred from the absence of previously-visible phenomena.

Preventive services can be categorized under five headings:

(i) True Prevention

True prevention is intervention in a social situation before a "problem" has begun to develop. It relies on anticipation of problems and appropriate action.

(ii) Early Interception

This is intervention in the situation at the first visible, preferably very early sign of a problem, so that action can be taken to prevent the problem from having serious consequences.

(iii) Helping Services

Some helping services; that is, services designed to make people's lives easier and to reduce pressures on them, are preventive, if the people being helped are at risk in some specific way as, for example, single parents, handicapped people, elders, people who have had major changes in their lives, etc.

(iv) Personal Development

These are services designed to increase people's personal capacities and to strengthen their ability to cope with various situations. They are not designed to prevent specific problems, but to reduce risk that people will break down under any pressure that comes along.

Other common types of service are not preventive in nature. Treatment, by definition, is not preventive, since it assumes that the situation has deteriorated to the point where it needs treatment. Interceptions leading to treatment that come when problems are well developed, or have reached crisis proportions, are not preventive. Recreation services (or leisure services) are normally carried out "for fun", without being oriented to problems in any way. They can, however, be used as treatment for some people, and for some problems.

APPENDIX D
ORGANIZATIONS ASSISTED BY
THE GRANDE PRAIRIE AND DISTRICT UNITED WAY

Canadian Arthritis and Rheumatism Society
Canadian Mental Health Association
Canadian National Institute for the Blind
Canadian Paraplegic Association
Cool Aid
Croken House Women's Hostel
Grande Prairie and District Golden Age Centre
Grande Prairie Friendship Centre
John Howard Society
Kidney Foundation
Peace Counselling Centre
Red Cross Society
St. John Ambulance Society
Society for the Physically Handicapped
Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Victorian Order of Nurses

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